

Clinton to postpone major defence cuts

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton wants to delay cuts in major weapons systems for one year while he pares overall military spending with a pay freeze, troop reductions and changes in the Star Wars programme, the Defence Department revealed Saturday. Mr. Clinton and Defence Secretary Les Aspin outlined their proposal for spending \$263.4 billion in the fiscal year starting Oct. 1 in budget documents released at the Defence Department. The budget is about \$10 billion below this year's spending level. Given Mr. Clinton's pledge to cut some \$80 billion from President George Bush's defence spending plans over the next four years, the most painful cuts apparently are yet to come, Mr. Aspin said. In the past the former Soviet Union was the focus for all defence planning. "They were at the heart of everything we did," he told reporters at a Defence Department briefing. "The question now is what replaces the Soviet Union." He detailed the new threats as "regional menaces" such as Iraq, Libya and North Korea, the possible reversal of reform in the former Soviet Union and economic problems.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية غير منحازة المنشورة بالوكالة للجمعية الصحفية الأردنية

Yemeni council confirms April elections

SANAA (R) — Yemen's presidential council Saturday confirmed the country's first general elections would be held next month, calming opposition fears of a possible second postponement of the polls. Radio Sanaa said the council, which met under the chairmanship of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, issued a decree urging all eligible Yemenis to take part in the elections on April 27. The elections, originally scheduled for last November, will be the first under a multi-party system introduced after North Yemen and South Yemen merged in 1990. Opposition parties were suspicious of the intentions of Mr. Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC) and Vice-President Ali Salem Al-Baidh's Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) which have shared power since the unification. The ruling parties said they would cooperate in the coming elections against the opposition but they have not yet reached an agreement to go into the elections united. Opposition forces are also trying to close ranks and to put up joint candidates.

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Iraq wins contracts in Yemen, Sudan

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq said Saturday it had signed contracts with Yemen and Sudan for the construction and repair of power stations in the two countries. "The General Establishment for the Production of Electrical Power has signed contracts for the implementation of several projects in Yemen and Sudan," the official weekly magazine Al-Fajr said. It did not say how many contracts had been signed nor gave their value. The establishment won a contract in Yemen after competing with other international companies, it said. Al-Fajr said Iraq, suffering punitive United Nations trade sanctions imposed in response to its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, had gained expertise as a result of the embargo and had rebuilt a large portion of what was destroyed during the Gulf war.

Tunisian rights group wins ruling

TUNIS (R) — The disbanded Tunisian human rights league (LTDH) has won a preliminary ruling which should permit it to resume activities, a magistrate said Saturday. The magistrate in the administrative court said the LTDH, one of the oldest human rights groups in the Arab World, had been tentatively exempted from a decree which reduced the leeway of organisations in screening applicants for membership. Rather than submit to the decree, the league last June decided to disband. The court ruling, which has not yet been finalised, followed consultations between President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and LTDH Secretary General Taoufik Boudelhal. LTDH sources said that the court's decision should permit it to resume operations.

U.S. withdraws Kuwait task force

KUWAIT (R) — A U.S. military task force including a Patriot missile battery deployed in Kuwait amid heightened tension with Iraq in January was withdrawn from the emirate in stages in March, a U.S. official said Saturday. "There are no Patriots in Kuwait at this time," the official told Reuters by telephone. "The task force that came in January has gone. They moved out in stages this month." The official said the withdrawal would have no effect on a longstanding schedule of military exercises that would continue to be conducted jointly by the U.S. and Kuwaiti armed forces.

Emergency in Greek town hit by quake

ATHENS (R) — The Greek government Saturday declared a state of emergency in the western town of Pyrgos, hit by four earthquakes which killed one person, injured 16 and damaged more than 500 buildings. Tents, medical and other supplies were rushed to the area hit by the quakes on Friday and army units were put on alert to offer assistance, a Public Works Ministry statement said. Police said most of Pyrgos's 28,000 residents spent the night outdoors, fearing new tremors. Fires were lit for heat, residents carried clothes and valuables from their damaged homes and bulldozers removed debris from the streets. "There were many after-tremors which kept the panic going. Electricity was cut off, a number of state buildings were damaged and a wing of the town's hospital was evacuated when the ceiling collapsed," a police officer in Pyrgos said. The town, just inland from the Ionian Sea, was hit by four earthquakes Friday afternoon measuring up to 5.2 on the Richter scale. The strongest had its epicentre 190 kilometres west of Athens.

U.N. envoy accuses Serbs of bad faith

BELGRADE (R) — The U.N. special envoy to former Yugoslavia Saturday accused Serb leaders of bad faith by blocking an aid convoy after they had promised it would be allowed through. Jose Maria Mendiluce, a special envoy of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said the convoy destined for the trapped Bosnian town of Srebrenica had been ordered to return to Belgrade and would try to cross again Sunday (see page 8).

Assad hedges on prospects for peace talks

Arabs meet in Damascus today

Combined agency dispatches

SYRIAN President Hafez Al Assad reiterated Saturday that Syria wanted a comprehensive Middle East peace but hedged on whether Damascus would reenter talks with Israel next month if the Palestinians stayed away.

Mr. Assad was in Cairo for talks with President Hosni Mubarak on whether Arabs should resume talks in Washington next month while the issue that stalled them in December,

Israel's expulsion of 415 Palestinians to Lebanon, remained unresolved.

Syria, Jordan and Lebanon have said they would go but they want a face-saving concession from the Palestinians, who refuse to attend unless Israel promises not to expel any more people from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Asked if Syria was ready to take part in the Washington talks (Continued on page 5)



Syrian President Hafez Al Assad (right) and his Egyptian counterpart Hosni Mubarak (center) review a guard of honour upon Mr. Assad's arrival in Cairo Saturday for a brief visit (AFP photo)

Non-committal Palestinian stand expected in Damascus

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Palestinians are expected to be non-committal about attending round nine of the Arab-Israeli peace talks at a Damascus meeting Sunday and Monday of foreign ministers of the four Arab parties to the negotiations.

Palestinians are expected to conclude with a statement saying their participation hinges on an Israeli pledge not to resort to further expulsions of Palestinians from the occupied territories.

Haidar Abdul Shafi, the chief Palestinian negotiator who is also attending the Damascus conference, said that the chances for a Palestinian return to the peace table was much more likely if the Israelis make such a pledge.

The Palestinians have a number of options open to them. One is to accept an American-backed proposal which would link an Israeli promise (which has not yet been made) not to expel any more Palestinians with a phased return of the Palestinian expellees stuck in South Lebanon since their banishment on Dec. 17.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leadership in Tunis as well as Dr. Abdul Shafi and the overall head of the Palestinian team, Faisal Hussein, have said that an Israeli promise renouncing expulsions would enable the Palestinians to return to the peace talks on April 20.

The three other Arab participants — Jordan, Syria and Lebanon — have expressed hope that expellee crisis would be resolved to enable them to attend the peace talks. His Majesty King Hussein said last month that Jordan's attendance will depend on the attendance of the Palestinians.

Palestinians close to the PLO and the negotiating team welcomed the King's remarks saying they implemented the necessary show of Arab unity to pressure Israel into taking positive action towards the Palestinian demands.

"The PLO welcomed this statement because it was another way of saying we support your demands for a call to end the expulsions and we are willing to

(Continued on page 3)

U.N. envoy sees no quick fix in Somalia

MOGADISHU (R) — The U.N. envoy to Somalia said Saturday the world organisation's costliest field operation would take time to organise and achieve results in the anarchic Horn of Africa country.

"We are going from a small mandate to a huge one. We will not do this overnight," retired Admiral Jonathan Howe told reporters after the Security Council unanimously approved establishment of a 30,000-strong U.N. operation in the Horn of Africa country.

The operation will replace a U.S.-led multinational force which landed in Somalia in December to restore order and protect distribution of relief supplies from marauding clan fighters whose feuds killed thousands of people (see page 2).

Adm. Howe said a May 1 date for a formal transfer of command was more theoretical than practical.

"May 1 was really an accounting decision and I doubt whether it will be May 1," he said.

The U.N. peacekeepers have been given an unusually broad mandate, including use of force

to deal with armed gangs and confiscate weapons. U.N. peacekeepers normally open fire only in self-defence.

"But to say we will be able to disarm in a few months — no, it won't happen overnight," Adm. Howe said.

U.N. Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II), as the force is called, will cost an estimated \$856.4 million during the first six-month period mandated by the council.

"I don't care how talented our people are, but we will see a UNOSOM III," Adm. Howe said, predicting that the operation would have to go on for some time.

If UNOSOM II is prolonged, the cost for the first year would be \$1.5 billion, making it the U.N.'s most expensive field operation.

"The resolution is excellent and I could not ask for more support," Adm. Howe, a Canadian, added.

Adm. Howe described relief and aid organisations in Somalia as the frontline troops battling

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Supporters of Russian President Boris Yeltsin listen to live radio coverage of the extraordinary session

Saturday of the Congress of People's Deputies (AFP photo)

Hardliners fail in bid to impeach Yeltsin in congress

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Hardline lawmakers failed Saturday to remove President Yeltsin from office.

The votes followed intense jockeying at the Congress of People's Deputies over questions to be put to the nation in an April 25 referendum on who should rule Russia. Hardline lawmakers declared Mr. Yeltsin had violated the constitution.

But the congress, dominated by former Communists elected before the Soviet Union's collapse, voted 389-342 against a resolution that would have called the president's recent actions "an unacceptable violation of the con-

stitution of the Russian Federation."

Hardliners in the Russian unity faction then made a sudden bid for the congress to vote by secret ballot on removing Mr. Yeltsin from office. But the chairman of the congress' rules committee said the item first needed to be put on the agenda.

The vote of 475-337 with 46 abstentions fell short of the 517 votes needed for a majority in the 1,033-member congress, and thus did not go onto the agenda.

Mr. Yeltsin, intervening to forestall a new attack on his authority, made a hesitant and stumbling appeal to the legisla-

ture for a further week of crisis talks.

"Let us walk out of this hall so everyone can see there is mutual trust, agreement and consensus between us," he told the congress an unscheduled intervention.

"The Russian people will calm down," Congress did not vote on the president's request and ended an increasingly unruly session by voting to resume Sunday.

Mr. Yeltsin said he, Parliament Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov, Constitutional Court Chairman Valery Zorkin and Prime Minister

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Blast kills 1 at Cairo police station

CAIRO (Agencies) — A police officer was killed and five people were injured Saturday when a time-bomb thrown under a police car by a suspected Muslim militant blew up as explosives experts were examining it.

Cairo police chief Hani Abdul Aziz told reporters four police officers had been injured and security sources said later that one of them had died. A witness said two civilians had also been hurt.

Mr. Abdul Aziz said: "This is a continuation of the terrorist plan. It was done by terrorists who are targeting the police."

Police officers use the word "terrorist" to mean Muslim militants fighting to overthrow the government and turn Egypt into a purist Islamic state.

Mr. Abdul Aziz said a man threw a bag containing the bomb under a police car parked in Ataba Square, one of central Cairo's most crowded public places. Explosives experts took it to their office in a nearby building to examine it and it exploded.

"As soon as the officer arrived and began inspecting it, it blew up in his office and injured a colonel and three majors," he said.

Gamaleddin Abu Seia, a 33-year-old man working in the building, told Reuters two civilians had been injured in the explosion and a third had been taken to hospital in hysterics.

He said two officers' fingers

(Continued on page 5)



Egyptian security forces Saturday guard Ataba Square in the heart of Cairo after a bomb exploded at a police station (AFP photo)

3 killed in S. Lebanon violence

MARJAYOUN, Lebanon (Agencies) — Resistance fighters killed an Israeli-backed militia man in South Lebanon on Saturday, drawing Israeli and allied artillery fire that killed two civilians and wounded nine, security sources said.

The violence erupted when guerrillas from the Lebanese Communist Party detonated a roadside bomb as a patrol of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia drove near Sidoun village, north of the town of Jezzine.

One militiaman was killed and two others were wounded in the blast, the sources said.

The Israeli army confirmed that an SLA man was killed in a clash with guerrillas in South Lebanon.

The Lebanese military command had earlier reported a tank-fire duel between the Lebanese army and the Israeli army in the Jezzine area, but the Israeli army spokesman who reported the SLA death would not confirm the tank battle.

The tank battle was the biggest of its kind since the newly restructured Lebanese army was deployed in South Lebanon in 1991.

The Lebanese military reported six civilian injuries as a result of Israeli tank-fire on the

Israeli policeman killed in Tulkarm

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

(Agencies) — An Israeli border policeman was shot dead in an ambush in the occupied West Bank on Saturday and two Palestinian bystanders were wounded when his colleagues returned fire, Israel Radio said.

The radio identified the border policeman as a Muslim who volunteered for the paramilitary force six months ago.

A senior army commander in the area said on the radio a gunman fired three bullets at a border police jeep as it drove slowly through the town of Tulkarm.

The border policeman, identified as Jamal Masalha, 19, was killed, and the assailant escaped. Israeli authorities placed Tulkarm under curfew.

The death of the policeman brought to nine the number of Israelis killed in March, the worst month of violence since Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin took office last June.

Twenty-three Palestinians have died since the beginning of the month, six of whom were 12 years old or younger.

Saturday's shooting was the fourth successful shooting ambush in the occupied territories since the beginning of the month, underscoring less Palestinian reluctance to use guns.

Assailants opened fire Friday night on an army patrol in the town of Bani Sueiba in the occupied Gaza Strip, but no-one was injured, Arab reports said.

The increased violence has

brought calls from the right-wing opposition for Mr. Rabin to resign. Palestinian negotiators have warned that the high Palestinian casualty rate could sabotage the U.S.-backed peace talks.

In Saturday's incident, the assailant opened fire with an Uzi sub-machinegun from a distance of three metres on two jeeps patrolling a shopping street in the town of Tulkarm, the army said.

The troops returned fire, injuring two passersby in the feet, but the assailant had escaped, an officer identified only as Col. M. told Israel Radio.

The army closed the area for searches and detained several Palestinians, the army said.

Masalha was a volunteer conscript from a town in northern Israel.

Muslims are not required to serve in the armed forces. The few who volunteer mostly join the paramilitary police, a unit under the auspices of the police ministry.

The killing took place three days before Land Day, when Arab Israelis commemorate 1976 clashes over government land appropriation in northern Israel that left six Arabs dead.

Last year, Arab leaders toned down Land Day demonstrations after Arab-Israeli assailants killed three soldiers on an army base.

In other violence, Palestinians shot to death a man in Gaza City Friday night, Arab reports said. Neighbours knew the man to be a collaborator with Israel, the reports said.

New U.N. team in Iraq

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — A new U.N. inspection team arrived in Baghdad Saturday with a message that sanctions would not be lifted unless Iraq complied with Security Council Gulf war resolutions.

"The special commission decided to conduct a monitoring of Iraqi capability in different areas including the missile area," said senior inspector Nikita Semidovich, a Russian.

The eight-member team was sent into Iraq by the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM), entrusted with dismantling its weapon programmes, only hours after Baghdad was served with a surprisingly milder warning at U.N. headquarters in New York.

The United States, Britain, France and Russia told Iraq's U.N. ambassador his country remained in violation of Security Council resolutions.

Recently, Iraq has not been challenging U.N. weapons inspectors or flight bans in a major way, apparently offering an olive branch to the new American president. But the United States and its allies worry that Iraq will get tough again after Monday when the council is expected to keep in place crippling economic sanctions against Iraq.

The council reviews the sanctions against Iraq every two months, and has been routinely renewing them because of what it sees as Baghdad's continued non-compliance with U.N. resolutions passed after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Monday's review is receiving particularly close attention because it is the first since President Bill Clinton completed a review of U.S. policy towards Iraq.

The first clue of that new policy was when the Clinton administration moved away from personalising the conflict. President George Bush and his aides had repeatedly tied lifting of sanctions to President Saddam's ouster. Mr. Clinton's approach is to base U.S. policy on less a political and more a legal basis, namely compliance with U.N. resolutions.

The new approach was reflected in a statement the ambassadors of the United States, France, Britain and Russia issued at the United Nations after meeting Friday with Iraq's envoy, Nizar Hamdoun.

The allies said they had delivered a "cautionary message" to Mr. Hamdoun, warning that "any provocative actions by Iraq would receive a firm response from the coalition."

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French Socialists hope to escape total rout

PARIS (R) — France's outgoing Socialists, fearful of being buried by a conservative landslide, have appealed to voters for last-minute support in Sunday's second round of elections to keep the voice of the left alive.

The centre-right Union for France (UPF) opposition alliance set the stage for a crushing victory in last Sunday's first round of the general election as voters punished the Socialists for rising unemployment and corruption scandals.

There were no campaigning or political statements Saturday, a pre-poll day of reflection.

Analysts concentrated on the issues still to be settled in Sunday's run-off vote — the size and breakdown of the conservative majority, the fate of leading Socialists fighting for their parliamentary seats and whether or

not the ecologists and the far-right National Front can snatch a seat or two.

Commentators said that even with a swing in their favour, the Socialists would be lucky to clinch 80 seats in the 577-seat National Assembly. With just 17.6 per cent of the vote in the first round, they could slump to 40 seats from the 277 they won in the last elections in 1988.

The Communists, suffering less of a decline, took 9.2 per cent of the first round vote and are set to win about 15 seats.

The UPF alliance of ex-Premier Jacques Chirac's Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR) and former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's Union for French Democracy (UDF) is likely to win 50 or more seats.

Former Prime Minister and Socialist Party leader Laurent

Fabius appealed for a leftist surge, saying the scale of the right's majority would make France look like a banana republic.

He said the Socialists could fail to win the 58 seats, one tenth of the assembly needed to call votes of no-confidence.

Former Prime Minister Michel Rocard, hoping to run for president when Francois Mitterrand steps down in 1995 but fighting for his parliamentary seat, predicted a "one-legged" assembly.

But newspaper said the Socialists could not realistically expect much from the 30 per cent of voters who abstained last week or from ecologist supporters whose candidates are almost all out of the running.

"Despite the hopes placed by, the left in a rebound it should not be forgotten that the second

round generally confirms or amplifies the first round," said the daily Liberation.

The UPF scored 39.5 per cent of the vote and won 80 seats outright last week, leaving 497 seats to be decided.

Liberation quoted political analyst Pierre Martin as saying the Socialists were assured of 20 seats, likely to win another 23 and less likely to win a further 24.

Among top Socialists battling for their seats are Mr. Rocard, Mr. Fabius, Prime Minister Pierre Bérégovoy, Foreign Minister Roland Dumas and Education and Culture Minister Jack Lang.

An ecologist alliance, which scored a disappointing 7.6 per cent of the vote in the first round, has just two candidates, "both women, left in the second round."

(Continued on page 3)

Motive eludes FBI probe into New York blast

NEW YORK (Agencies) — The investigation of the World Trade Centre bombing has achieved more in a month than any law enforcement dared predict in the frantic days after the blast. But despite five arrests and the discovery of the bomb's ingredients, the plotters' motive remains unknown.

Investigators were on the trail of another suspect, described as a cab driver and onetime roommate of Mohammed Salameh, the first person arrested in connection with the explosion. They also were tracing thousands of dollars from abroad.

And they were trying to find a motive in the Feb. 26 blast that killed six people and injured more than 1,000.

At least one and perhaps two suspects may eventually help provide those leads.

Bilal Al Kaisy, 27, who surrendered Wednesday, has provided some leads to investigators, a federal law enforcement source said Friday.

Also Friday, the Los Angeles Times reported that another suspect, Mahmud Abu Halima, cooperated with authorities in Egypt before he was returned to the United States.

But Mr. Abu Halima's lawyer, Jesse Berman, said his client was "beaten, beaten, hung like a piece of meat" and forced to make false admissions while detained in Egypt.

The two instances mark the first time investigators have said any of the five people in custody have provided assistance.

"While Mr. Kaisy denied any involvement in the bombing, 'he has provided leads,' a federal investigator speaking on the condition of anonymity told the Associated Press. He declined to elaborate.

One federal investigator said Friday that some experts are leaning towards the theory that the attack was "a home-grown idea thought up by a group of loosely connected people" and not sponsored by an established organisation or foreign power.

"But this theory can change tomorrow," said the investigator, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "We just don't know the reason for it."

Equally confusing was the suspects' failure to evade detection.

The men charged with the attack used their names and had incriminating evidence in their homes, according to investigators. They lived, worshipped, protested, ate and banked together.

"What his yos in the face is the lack of concern for the safety of the cell by whoever planned this thing," said Mike Ackerman, a security consultant and former intelligence agent.

The big break was the discovery, two days after the bomb shattered the centre's basement garage, of a metal shard with a vehicle identification number. That pointed the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to the van that apparently contained the bomb and to Mr. Salameh, who had rented it using his own name.

The bombers should have known their bomb was not powerful enough to pulverise the van and eliminate it as evidence, Mr. Ackerman said.

A search of Mr. Salameh's apartment uncovered bomb making equipment and led investigators to a storage shed containing the chemicals they believe were used to make the bomb.

On the rental form Mr. Salameh had listed the address of Ibrahim Al Gabrowny, an Egyptian living in New York, arrested after he allegedly eluded federal agents sent to search his apartment.

Mr. Salameh was carrying the business card of Nidal Ayyad, a chemical engineer, and telephone records showed that on the day before the bombing Mr. Salameh repeatedly called Mr. Ayyad at his office from a pay phone near the storage shed.

Mr. Ayyad was arrested at home, where investigators say they found a timing device similar to those used in bombings.

Mr. Salameh, Mr. Ayyad and Mr. Gabrowny had taken part in demonstrations to support Al Sayyid Nosair, an Egyptian who was tried and acquitted in the slaying of radical Rabbi Meir Kahane, and they worshipped at the same mosques.

These connections helped steer investigators to another member of their circle — Mr. Abu Halima. While Mr. Abu Halima did leave town, he left behind enough evidence in his apartment to be indicted. He committed a most basic mistake — he went home, his father's house in Egypt, where he was picked up.

Much of the known evidence lends itself to other explanations. Mr. Ayyad's lawyer, for instance, said his client received none of Mr. Salameh's calls on the day before the bombing because he was in a company safety committee meeting. He had a joint account with Mr. Salameh, the attorney said, for a candy distribution business like the one Mr. Ayyad used to put himself through college.

The suspects' conduct suggested a defence: If we are the bombers, why did we try harder to cover up or get away?

The FBI learned Mr. Abu Halima was in Egypt from his brother, who later was asked by reporters about the revelation. "Why not?" the brother said. "We have nothing to hide."

"There's at least one more suspect out there," Jim Lamb, FBI spokesman in Newark, New Jersey, said. He said investigators were still trying to locate the suspect.

He refused to be more specific, but a senior FBI official said earlier this week that the circle of suspects in the case was narrowing.

FBI Director William Sessions and New York Director James Fox said Thursday they saw no signs the bombing was part of any international campaign.

Earlier in the probe, Mr. Fox had said that the execution of the bombing led to a "gut feeling" that one of the "old-line" groups from the Middle East was possibly behind the attack.

Asked about his apparent change of view, Mr. Fox said at a news conference: "I don't have gut feelings any more."

Police said that 50 calls of responsibility were received after the bombing, but none apparently contained enough specifics to verify the claim.

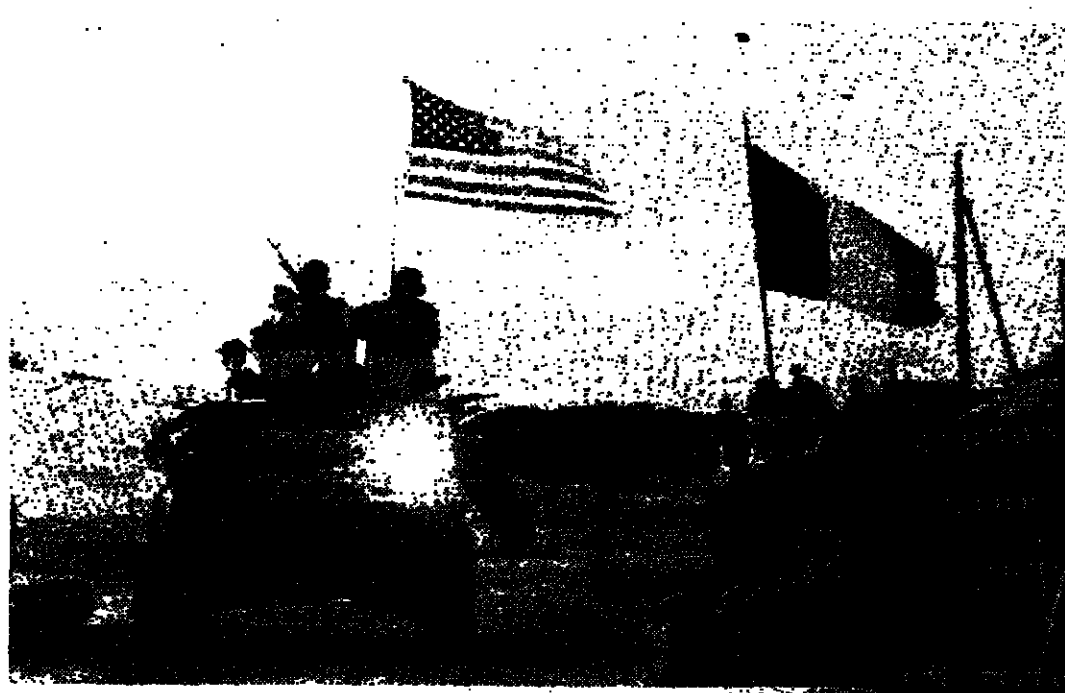
Defence lawyers and family members adamantly deny that those charged were involved in the blast.

They say the six have ties that are common within a tight-knit immigrant community and can offer alibis for the time just before the bombing.

A newspaper said Friday the explosive device used in the trade centre bombing was made with compressed hydrogen gas and a timing mechanism typical of "terrorist" bombs.

The hydrogen gas intensified the explosion and created a destructive fireball, unnamed investigators told the New York Times. Initially, it was thought that only sulfuric and nitric acids and urea had been used.

The day before the bombing, Mr. Salameh and another man waited at a Jersey City storage shed for a shipment of large cylinders of hydrogen gas, the Times said.



U.S. Marines pass a Belgian checkpoint in the southern Somali port of Kismayu on their way to a border town (AFP photo)

Car accident may have led FBI to blast suspect

JERSEY CITY (AP) — A car accident last month may have led the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to one of the suspects charged in the World Trade Centre bombing.

A Jersey City police report placed chemical engineer Nidal A. Ayyad in a rental car driven by Mohammed Salameh, the first suspect arrested in connection with the blast. Mr. Salameh was involved in a collision with a Bayonne, New Jersey, woman on Feb. 16, 10 days before the bombing that killed six and injured more than 1,000.

Donna Krantz, 22, said she learned that the men with whom she had a minor accident were also suspects in the bombing when the rental car agency sent a notice demanding payment for damage to the vehicle.

"We checked the names on the slip and that's when we made the connection," Ms. Krantz told the Jersey Journal in Friday's edition. "I said, 'my God, I hit the mad bombers.' When they hit me, they kept going at first, stopping two blocks away. They were acting fidgety."

According to the accident report, the crash occurred eight blocks from a Jersey City storage company where the FBI found bomb-making material in a storage room rented by Mr. Salameh. The car was rented in Mr. Ayyad's name from National Rentals System in Newark.

A timing device similar to those used in bombings was found in Mr. Ayyad's maplewood home, a prosecutor said Thursday during a court appearance in New York by Mr. Ayyad, Mr. Salameh and three other suspects in the case.

The Journal also reported Friday that Mr. Salameh got into another car accident in Woodbridge on Jan. 24. Mahmoud Abu Halima, another suspect in the bombing, lived in that city.

It could not immediately be determined what vehicle was involved in the accidents. Authorities said Mr. Salameh rented the van used to carry the bomb into a parking garage beneath the trade centre.

Police officers blocked midday traffic along busy Washington streets while the demonstrators, most of them U.S. residents, made their way to the Capitol, singing and chanting slogans.

Police estimated the crowd at about 900, while unofficial estimates were more than double that.

Many of the women covered their hair with long scarves in accordance with Islamic custom, but they said they strongly opposed Tehran's religious-run government, especially its treatment of women.

The National Council of Resistance has accused Tehran of flagrantly abusing human rights and spreading terrorism abroad. It also says the government has executed 100,000 of its members and imprisoned and tortured 150,000 more since 1979.

Mohammad Mohadesin, the council's foreign relations director, urged President Bill Clinton to recognise the group and join an arms and oil embargo against Iran.

In an interview after his speech, Mr. Mohadesin said he had no indication of any shift in the administration's position to support the Mujahadeen.

"But I hope this will be the case," he said.

GCC chief says Iraq and Iran pose threat

DUBAI (R) — The man who takes over as head of the six-country Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) on Thursday says he believes regional neighbours Iraq and Iran still pose a threat to the security of the oil-rich Gulf region.

Sheikh Fahim Al Qassimi, who becomes secretary general of the council on April 1, said Iraq's refusal to abandon its claim to Kuwait and Iran's military presence on three disputed Gulf islands were a source of worry for the six GCC states.

"The Iraqi regime still threatens Kuwait, violates its territory as well as United Nations Security Council resolutions," the Emirates News Agency (WAM) quoted Sheikh Fahim as saying on Friday.

"Iran also has so far not given any indication that it plans to withdraw from the occupied islands, which does not help stability in the region and is a worry for the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council," he added.

Sheikh Fahim is a United Arab Emirates (UAE) diplomat who replaces Kuwait's Abdullah Bishara as secretary-general of the Riyadh-based regional military and economic alliance set up in 1982 by the six Gulf Arab oil states.

Of the UAE's dispute with Iran over the three strategic Gulf islands, Sheikh Fahim said the UAE "asks Iran as a Muslim neighbour... to return what the regime of the Shah took and to respond to calls by the UAE to solve the issue peacefully especially that the UAE has historic and legal documents proving its rights to and sovereignty over the three islands."

The dispute reemerged a year ago when Iran took measures on the island of Abu Musa that were seen by the UAE as tantamount to annexation and a violation of a 1971 agreement under which control of the island was shared.

An angry UAE also demanded that Iran end its occupation of two other islands, the Great and Lesser Tumb, that had been occupied by the Shah, also in 1971.

Diplomats say Iran has rescinded its measures on Abu Musa, including its ban on third country nationals going to the island without an Iranian passport.

But the UAE saw Iranian action on Abu Musa as undermining the previous relations of trust between the two countries. It is now insisting that a settlement of the row over all three islands is necessary.

U.N. council votes to take over from U.S.-led force in Somalia

Somali shot dead

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The Security Council voted Friday to take over peacekeeping in Somalia from a U.S.-led force, sending in the largest and most powerful U.N. force in history.

The 20,000-member force would replace U.S. troops who have been trying to feed and calm the war ravaged Horn of Africa country since December in what was originally intended as a brief relief mission.

The U.N. troops would take over May 1, under the ambitious U.S. proposal adopted unanimously by the 15-nation Security Council.

The force would cost \$1.5 billion, and would virtually run the country.

It would return hundreds of thousands of refugees to their homes, clear land mines, set up a police force, help rebuild the economy and conduct talks on creating a new government.

The Security Council authorised its troops to do whatever is necessary to maintain peace, disarm warring factions and protect relief workers.

Their efforts would be on an even vaster scale than those under way in Cambodia, where 22,000 peacekeeping troops and civilians are trying to restore order and conduct elections after a devastating civil war.

The largest U.N. force in the former Yugoslavia, where 23,000 troops and civilians are running relief operations and monitoring ceasefire agreements.

In Somalia, the U.N. troops are to be under the command of Lieutenant-General Cevik Dir of Turkey. It would include U.S. troops — the first time a sizeable

number of American soldiers are under foreign command in a U.N. operation.

President George Bush sent troops into Somalia Dec. 9 to ward off famine in the central and southern parts of the country. Contingents from more than 20 countries joined in a force that numbered 37,000 troops at its peak.

U.S. officials repeatedly accused the United Nations of dragging its feet in taking over the operation. U.N. officials countered that they wanted the Americans to restore order first and needed time to design a comprehensive, long-term operation.

Hinting at Washington's impatience, U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright told the council before its vote that it was time for the United Nations "to resume its rightful leadership role" in Somalia.

She called the U.N. operation the "toughest coordination challenge of its history."

Secretary General Boutros Ghali is asking the world to send 28,000 combat troops and 8,000 support troops.

The United States is expected to provide most of the support troops and a 1,200-member combat force. U.S. Defence Secretary Les Aspin said the total would be 3,000 to 5,000 U.S. troops. Washington has insisted on retaining command of the combat troops.

The U.S.-led effort in Somalia covers only 40 per cent of the country's territory and involves only limited disarmament duties. The U.N. mission will be more dangerous — disarming more people, and over a larger area.

Security Council calls for progress at Cyprus talks

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — The Security Council called on the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities Friday to cooperate with Secretary-General Boutros Ghali and make progress at forthcoming talks aimed at reuniting their divided island.

The council statement said members would continue to follow the Cyprus question and lend their active support to the secretary-general, who was asked to report on the outcome of the March 30 meeting.

Cypriot council meets

The policymaking national council convened Friday, shortly after a senior U.N. official warned of a "last chance" for the reunification of the island.

The meeting came a day before President Clerides leaves for U.N. headquarters in New York.

Government spokesman Yannis Cassoulides said the meeting dealt with the forthcoming New York talks, but declined to elaborate.

The last-chance warning was made by Oscar Camillon, the retiring special U.N. representative for Cyprus, in a farewell interview with Cyprus Television Wednesday night.

Mr. Camillon said the forthcoming talks in New York between Mr. Clerides and Mr. Denktash "may be the last chance for Cyprus."

"If these two veteran Cypriot politicians cannot find a way to resolve the problem of the divided island, then there is a danger of a new status quo being created," Mr. Camillon added.

He left to take up his appointment as defence minister of Argentina after serving as U.N. special representative in Cyprus for the past five years.

Mr. Camillon appealed to the two Cypriot leaders to show "responsibility." He added that "the Cypriots themselves must try to find a solution, accepting the fact that they must share this island because no one from outside can provide a solution, or impose one."

Australian troops shot dead a Somali after they came under fire near the compound of the aid group Medicins Sans Frontieres in the central town of Baidoa, a U.S. military spokesman said Saturday.

"They returned fire and one Somali was killed and an Australian wounded, although not seriously," he said.

In another incident on Friday, a soldier from Botswana lost both legs when a grenade exploded. It had been handed in to him by a Somali child in Mogadishu.

"He thought it was a dud grenade and so he put it down on the ground near to him. But quite a while later it exploded. We do not think it was intentional on the part of the child," the spokesman said.

Bid to loot refuse truck

Somali youths tried to loot a truck transporting waste from U.S. military lavatories on Friday.

The looters attacked the fully-loaded truck when it was leaving the military airport in Mogadishu, U.S. military spokesman Major Ken Roberts told reporters.

"The contracted truck is used to clean liquid waste from our toilets and we are very glad the looters did not manage to turn any valves," Maj. Roberts said.

The driver of the vehicle managed to shake off the looters, who appeared unaware of what the truck was carrying.

Kuwait interested in reviving arms project

CAIRO (AP) — Kuwait is trying to join a dormant Arab weapons manufacturing partnership and is offering cash to revive the four-country project, Defence Ministry sources said Saturday.

Sources speaking on condition of anonymity said the emirate was sending a military delegation to Cairo next week to discuss the future of the Arab Organisation for Industrialisation (AOI).

Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar founded the organisation in 1975 with capital of \$1.04 billion. The Gulf states abandoned the project after Egypt made peace with Israel in 1979. Egypt's attempts to keep its nine factories operating have been hampered by lack of money.

When the three Gulf partners withdrew, they froze more than \$200 million in project funds in foreign banks. With interest, those deposits now total more than \$670 million. The question of their disposal remains unresolved.

It was unclear how much money Kuwait is willing to produce to reactivate the organisation. All four of the founding countries contributed troops to the U.S.-led coalition that liberated Kuwait from Iraqi occupiers in February 1991.

After Iraq's 1990 invasion, there was talk of the four partners reviving the project to make weapons for Kuwaitis to resist the occupation. Nothing came of that.

Under Egyptian management, the Arab Organisation for Industrialisation is producing a wide variety of arms, ammunition and equipment, with technological help from French, British, American and Brazilian companies.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Reeves d'enfants
17:40 Les Cils de Fort Boyard
19:00 News in French
19:15 Le Journal de l'histoire
19:30 News in Arabic
20:30 Who's the Boss
21:10 Equinox
22:30 News in English
22:30 Simon and Simon

PRAYER TIMES

04:00 Fajr
05:26 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:41 Dhuhr
18:11 Maghreb
19:14 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swithest, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terranova Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 623541

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772561

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Assam International Church Tel. 652526

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823824, 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be relatively hot and winds will be southeasterly moderate, becoming in the evening northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas rough.

Min./Max. temp. 10/24

Aqaba 15/32

Dead Sea 17/26

Jordan Valley 14/30

Yesterday's high temperature: Amman 24, Aqaba 31, Humidity readings: Amman 17 per cent, Aqaba 17 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mohammad Al Azzeh 752971
Dr. Abdul Wahab Nadeem 846070
Dr. Wael Khatib 615648
Dr. Fakhri Bilal 684112
Firas pharmacy 661912
Perdons pharmacy 783336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Naboukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salem pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Akram Al Momani (-)
Alqada pharmacy 983417

ZARQA:
Dr. Yusef Awad (-)
Khalifah pharmacy 983417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 199
Rescue Police 192, 021111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 943002
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 661101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

HOSPITALS

Electric Power 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int'l. Airport 08-53200

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Al-Khazim Maternity, J. Amn 644412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsani 664171/4
Shamsani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Mushtak Hospital 66727/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Abi, Abdali 664164/6
Zarga Govt. Hospital 773112/6
Al-Badair, J. Asafiyah 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 0224050
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarga Govt. Hospital 09983323
Zarga National Hospital 09900560
The Sina Hospital 09986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital 0999990

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (09)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:15 Aqaba (RJ)
06:30 Beirut (RJ)
06:45 Jeddah (RJ)
06:55 Larnaca (RJ)
07:05 Beirut (RJ)
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Jordan's team to head for Damascus meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber and head of the Jordanian delegation to the Arab-Israeli bilateral negotiations Abdul Salam Al Majali leaves Amman for Damascus Sunday morning to attend a coordination meeting of Arab states involved in the Middle East peace process.

Dr. Abu Jaber told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that he hoped the meeting would contribute to enhancing coordination among Arab states participating in the peace process so as to boost their negotiating stands.

This meeting, Dr. Abu Jaber said, "is a good occasion to review developments in the Palestinian expellees issue and its effects on the peace process." He added that the meeting would also discuss the outcome of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to the region and Arab-American contacts which aim to create the proper atmosphere to resume the negotiations, stalled since last December when Israel expelled more than 400 Palestinians to South Lebanon.

Jordan's delegation to the meeting includes ambassadors Nayef Al Hadid and Nayef Al Qadhi.

Cabinet selects teams for various international meetings

AMMAN (Petra) — The Council of Ministers Saturday formed Jordan's delegation to the pan-Arab Conference on Population due to open in Amman on April 4, under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan.

The conference, organised by the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the U.N. Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and the Arab League, will be held in two stages: A technical stage and a ministerial stage.

Jordan will be represented at the meetings by a delegation led by Minister of Planning Ziad Fariz. The Jordanian team will comprise representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, the National Population Commission, the Ministry of Social Development, the Department of Statistics, and Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHIF), among other organisations.

The Cabinet Saturday also formed Jordan's delegation to the 21st meeting of the Islamic Foreign Ministers to be held in Karachi, Pakistan between April 24-29.

Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber will lead the Jordanian delegation to the meeting.

The Cabinet formed Jordan's delegation to the Annual Meeting of Governors of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) to be held in Damascus on April 14 and 15. Dr. Fariz will also head this Jordanian team.

In addition the Cabinet approved Jordan's participation in the 17th meeting of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) to open in Nairobi Kenya on May 10 and delegated Minister of Social Development Amin Awad Mashaqbeh to attend the meeting.

According to the Cabinet statement, the Nairobi meeting will discuss issues pertaining to the implementation of the June 1992 Earth Summit recommendations.

The Cabinet endorsed a decision to distribute technical and capital assistance from Germany to Jordan.

It was decided that DM 3 million will finance feasibility studies by the Water and the Jordan Valley Authorities.

The Council of Ministers also approved a plan for the second stage of the Aqaba Thermal Power Station.

Engineers, contractors fear cement shortage this summer

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) and the Jordanian Contractors Association (JCA) have voiced apprehension of another cement crisis in Jordan this summer similar to the one that occurred last year.

A cement crisis is inevitable because the causes of last year's crisis still exist and there has been no advance coordination among the concerned parties to avoid another, said JEA President Hosni Abu Ghaida.

The volume of construction during the summer of 1993 will not be less than summer 1992, when a total of six million square metres of construction were executed, Mr. Abu Ghaida said.

In addition, he said, the government construction projects this year are estimated to be greater in volume than those of last year.

Mr. Abu Ghaida said the problem will be compounded when the large number of people who have already acquired building licences for new homes set out to start their projects early this summer.

His views and apprehensions were echoed by JCA President Khalil Haddadin who said an acute cement crisis was expected this summer for two reasons: First, the volume of projects is expected to be similar to that of last year, and second the Jordan Cement Factories Company (JFCF) is still exporting cement to other countries in large quantities.

Mr. Haddadin called for coordination between the professional unions and the cement factory to overcome the looming crisis in the summer.

He said while the official price of a tonne of cement remains at JD 44, some merchants and profiteers have been selling a tonne for JD 75. Reacting to these comments, cement factory director Hatem Halawani said measures are underway to avoid such a crisis this summer.

"There won't be a crisis this summer similar to that of last year because we are going to put on the market at least one quarter million tonnes of cement in advance," he explained.

Mr. Halawani said that a contractor or an ordinary citizen bears the responsibility of refusing to be exploited and paying more than JD 44 for a tonne of cement in all parts of the country and not Amman alone.

Those who feel that they had been cheated by the merchants can resort to the local governors in their respective regions, he said.

But the company is going ahead with exporting surplus cement to honour its commitment Mr. Halawani added.

He said an agreement has been reached with the government whereby 2.4 million tonnes of cement would be sold in the local markets, up from 2.3 million tonnes last year.

Factory sources said Jordanian cement has been exported to Thailand, Singapore, Bangladesh, Yemen, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia.

In 1991 the company exported 1.3 million tonnes of cement, but no figures for 1992 were available.

They said the company, which last year produced 3 million tonnes of cement, was expecting to produce up to 3.5 million in 1993.

Regardless of the agreement with the government, the company was ready to pump additional amounts of cement into the local markets should the need arise, Mr. Halawani maintained.

He said this can be done by reducing the amounts being exported to foreign markets in favour of the local market.

Mr. Halawani said that tentatively, the company plans to export around one million tonnes of cement during 1993.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Royal Decree approves new courts

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was issued Saturday approving the statutes of civil courts in Jordan. The decree included the endorsement of the creation of a First Instance Court in Ajloun district and Peace Courts in Jiza, Amman, Dhiban, Madaba, Ein Basha, Karak, Husseiniyeh, Ma'an, Rweished and Mafrq.

Oman, UAE to attend labour meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Labour Abdul Karim Al Kabariti received Saturday at the Ministry of Labour Omani Ambassador to Jordan Mohammad Ben Sultan Al Bussaid and UAE Ambassador Mohammad Jassim Shikri in separate meetings. Mr. Kabariti received from the ambassadors their governments' acceptance to participate in the Arab Labour Conference which will be held in Amman in the beginning of April. The two countries will be represented at the conference by their labour ministers. Mr. Kabariti discussed with the two ambassadors the agenda of the conference and possible means to bring it to a successful end.

Minister, JMA head discuss incentives programme

AMMAN (Petra) — Health Minister Aref Bataineh and Ishaq Maraqa, President of the Jordanian Medical Association (JMA), Saturday discussed matters related to the introduction of a special incentives system for Jordanian doctors as approved by the Council of Ministers last year. They stressed the need to introduce some amendments to the projected system with a view to raising to 60 rather than 50 per cent the total amount of allowances to be given to doctors as incentives, as demanded by JMA. Dr. Bataineh said he would recommend this amendment to the Council of Ministers.

House to hear report on agriculture

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament will hold a session Sunday and hear a report by its Agricultural Committee on the agricultural situation in Jordan. The house is also expected to discuss a Parliamentary Committee report on the appointments of civil servants in government offices. On Monday afternoon, the Lower House plans to resume discussions.

Jordan's envoy promotes relations with Belgium

BRUSSELS (Petra) — Jordan's Ambassador to Belgium Talal Al Hassan has held talks with a number of Belgian officials in order to promote Jordanian-Belgian relations. He discussed economic and trade links with the Minister of Foreign Trade and reviewed preparations for a joint Jordanian-Belgian economic committee meeting to be held in Amman in May.

Al Bashir hospital to open more pharmacies

AMMAN (Petra) — Al Bashir Government Hospital in Amman plans to open additional pharmacies affiliated to its central pharmacy in order to accommodate the growing number of patients. A hospital official said arrangements are being made to introduce a system by which these branches would be provided with updated lists of available drugs and their prices.

Sheep to get Brucellosis vaccine

AQABA (Petra) — As of next Saturday the Agriculture Department here plans to launch a vaccination campaign to immunise sheep against Brucellosis. The campaign will be carried out in Disi, Tweiisi and Rum and will continue for one week.

Palestinians non-committal

(Continued from page 1)

forfeit going if that's what it takes to let the Israelis know we mean it," said an Amman-based PLO official.

While most diplomats are banking on a definite "yes" from foreign ministers of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan in Damascus, some say that the Arab parties will, like the Palestinians, refrain from making a definite commitment to going to the talks.

"There is a chance that the foreign ministers will say we are waiting for a commitment from Israel not to expel any more Palestinians and once that comes we will all go," said a Jordanian diplomat on condition of anonymity.

The more-likely scenario, most political observers say, is that the Arab countries represented at the Damascus meeting will affirm that they will attend the talks. Jordan may still insist that it will not go except as an entire delegation with the Palestinians, some observers say.

"The Palestinians are expected to go to Washington in late April, but it is most likely that their answer will not come until they have received assurances from the Americans about Israeli intentions to stop expelling Palestinians," added the Jordanian diplomat.

A commitment by Israel to begin applying U.N. resolutions 242 and 338 is also a request which

Mr. Hussein, who is currently in Washington, is following up on. The other option for the Palestinians is not to go to the talks until all its requests are officially met. Such a position, political observers say, is likely to create a political impasse in the peace process on the Palestinian-Israeli track which will hurt the Palestinians more than the Israelis.

"Every day wasted in the talks is a day where Israeli gains more ground in the West Bank," said a Palestinian close to the talks.

A major point of rebuttal will come whether the assurances not to expel and to abide by U.N. resolutions will come directly from the Israelis or through the American government.

Dr. Abdul Shafi told Jordan Television before leaving for Damascus that the Palestinians wanted a direct Israeli commitment. The PLO leadership in Tunis has indicated that American guarantees would be sufficient.

Observers believe that the Israelis will not make public concessions but will give a green light to the American administration to do so on their behalf.

The Palestinians in the occupied territories, observers say, will not be happy with such move but will be willing to see if the next round brings them any closer to an end to the occupation.

3 killed in South Lebanon violence

(Continued from page 1)

Israeli and SLA gunmen inside Israel's self-styled "security zone" also fired dozens of artillery shells into the villages of Iqlim Al Toufah mountain ridge, 40 kilometres south of Beirut, killing two civilians and wounding nine, sources said.

Lebanese troops and Hizbollah guerrillas fired back with artillery and mortars at SLA positions in the area, the sources added.

Hizbollah guerrillas, who have stepped up their attacks on Israeli and allied forces during the last few weeks, launch attacks from Iqlim Al Toufah against the 15-kilometre-deep buffer strip.

Officials report 18 deaths over 'Eid

AMMAN (J.T.) — A total of 18 persons died and more than 500 others were injured during the 'Eid Al Fitr holiday which ended Friday evening, according to sources at the Public Security Department (PSD), the Civil Defence Department (CDD) and local hospitals.

The CDD reported that it was called to extinguish 35 fires. CDD personnel provided first aid to 287 cases and rescued four people from either fire or drowning during the holiday, the report said.

The 18 reported deaths were the result of road accidents, shootings, physical assaults or natural causes.

Many of the injured were children who sustained bodily harm during family quarrels or from fires.

The PSD reported the murder of a young man in Mafrq governorate, who was attacked and stabbed by an assailant.

Police sources in Mafrq said the stabbing incident resulted from a feud between the two men.

The PSD also reported the death of a 28-year-old woman identified as Hanan Fahmawi who was burnt in a fire that engulfed her home in Hay Nazal district of Amman.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition entitled the Memory of Silk, displaying traditional Jordanian and Palestinian costumes, shawls, carpets, pottery, copperware, from the Widad Kavar collection — at the French Cultural Centre.

THEATRE

★ Play entitled "The Death of Thebes" at the Royal Cultural Centre's main theatre at 8 p.m.

CONCERT

★ Concert by the rock'n roll duo of Billy Stevens and Scott Almaleh at the University of Jordan's Prince Hassan Auditorium at 4 p.m.

U.N. envoy: No quick fix in Somalia

(Continued from page 1)

famine and said he hoped security conditions could be improved to enable them to do their work.

"You have to be deaf, dumb and blind not to understand their problems... we will never take out all the risk from the equation, but I hope we will be able to help them. We will never be able to protect them perfectly," he said.

Adm. Howe said he believed the U.N. had the support of Somalis.

"There are people who are fed up with war and chaos and they want to rebuild their country. We could not get off the ground without the great Somali people," he said.

U.S. show of strength

A U.S. amphibious landing force, backed by air cover, rumoured north from the volatile Somali port of Kismayu Saturday to dissuade further feuding by warlords.

Low-flying AV-8 Harrier fighter jets and Cobra helicopters provided air cover for the convoy, heading towards the town of Doble, on the Kenyan border. The town is headquarters of Kismayu's dominant warlord, Mohammed Said Hersi, also known as General Morgan.

The 4,200-strong U.S. amphibious troops force arrived in Kismayu by sea Thursday for a three-day operation which followed reports that Gen. Morgan's rival, Omar Jess, planned an offensive.

"We are attempting to intimidate an individual or two. We want to let people know we can come in quickly and do an operation," said Sergeant Norman North told Reuters.

Forces loyal to Gen. Morgan, now the dominant warlord in the area, drove out thousands of Jess' supporters from Kismayu last month. The U.S. military, denying it supported Gen. Morgan, ordered his gunmen out and later said he had complied.

RJ opens meeting on airport services

AMMAN (J.T.) — Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national air carrier, Saturday opened a 3-day airport services conference attended by directors of 50 RJ Stations as well as air transport departments.

Underlining the importance of coordination between directors of RJ stations and RJ departments, RJ Chief Executive Officer and President Mahmoud Jamal Balqez said that such coordination would ultimately result in better services to the passengers.

In his address at the opening session Mr. Balqez said that RJ's services are of paramount importance to its passengers.

New U.N. team arrives in Iraq

(Continued from page 1)

The statement said Iraq continued to violate U.N. resolutions. But the statement was less harsh than earlier warnings of the United States and its allies issued during the Bush administration. It omitted any reference to President Saddam and assured Baghdad that the allies were "committed to the preservation of the territorial integrity of Iraq and to easing the suffering of the civilian population."

Under the terms that ended the

Executive Vice President of Marketing and Services Akel Bilalji also addressed the session and outlined the most important issues to be reviewed at the conference, including the performance of RJ's 44 stations worldwide, issues related to reservations catering and freight.

He said participants will take part in specialised workshops to discuss several issues related to airport services and station operations.

Mr. Balqez has ruled that conferences on airport services be held annually similar to the RJ marketing and sales conferences.

French Socialists hope for survival

(Continued from page 1)

One of them, Green spokeswoman Dominique Voynet, stands some chance of election after receiving enthusiastic backing from the Socialists.

Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front, with 12.5 per cent of the vote last week and 100 candidates still in the running, could win two seats.

Mr. Chirac's RPR is set to beat its UDF partner and become the largest group in Parliament, leaving the way open for Mr. Mitterrand to pick the RPR's favoured candidate, 63-year-old former Finance Minister Edouard Balladur, as prime minister.

Mr. Mitterrand, facing a repeat of the power-sharing of 1986-88

when the right was last in government, has a free hand in picking the premier.

Mr. Chirac, who has ambitions to succeed Mr. Mitterrand and does not want the premier's job again himself, on Friday retracted a demand that the president resign following the elections. His climbdown came after Mr. Mitterrand suggested he might look to UDF for his choice of prime minister.

Polling stations open at 8 a.m. (0600 GMT) Sunday and close at 6 p.m. In rural areas, 7 p.m. in towns and 8 p.m. (1800 GMT) in the big cities, including Paris. Television will broadcast first results and reliable computer projections at 8 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Beirut University College Alumni Club (B.U.C.) announces the arrival of

Mrs. Layla Dagher, Director of Public Relations in the college, who will be glad to receive all students and parents interested in application forms and information about the college in Amra Hotel between 4-6 p.m. Sunday the 28th and Monday the 29th. of March.

From 1 st of April 1993

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الخطايا



Royal Jordanian President Mahmoud Jamal Balqez (centre) Saturday presides over the opening session of a 3-day airport services conference

Al Amal cancer centre reports on progress, plans and finances

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — In updating Al Amal Cancer Centre's Task Force figures of February 6, 1993, Abdullah Al Khatib told the Jordan Times Saturday that the financial committee has taken delivery of nearly JD 5 million in cash plus JD 1 million in lands, jewellery, cars, medical equipment and furniture, and is receiving JD 1 million in instalments from donors who had pledged to finance the project.

The Jordan Cement Factories Company (JFCF) has pledged 500 tonnes of cement needed for the project and the Islamic Development Bank has pledged \$5 million in soft loans to help operate the centre, said Dr. Khatib, who steers the Task Force charged with the construction of the new cancer centre.

Most of the pledges for the construction and furnishing of the centre were made during the October 1992 campaign in Jordan, but nonetheless Jordanian citizens and organisations continue to offer financial and in-kind assistance without running another campaign, Dr. Khatib said.

He said, "We are going to need up to JD 13 million to fully build and equip the centre and JD 3 million will be needed to cover operational costs on an annual basis."

Next week, the Task Force will host an engineering consultant from the Netherlands who will advise on the medical equipment required for the centre, Dr. Khatib reported.

The centre will offer patients medical treatment free of charge, added Dr. Khatib.

According to Dr. Khatib a U.S. firm has just completed a study on the needs of Al Amal

Cancer Centre and has provided proposals and ideas on enlarging the present building and promoting the centre's services to cancer patients in other Arab countries as well.

The U.S. team came to Jordan upon an invitation from Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker who chairs the Centre's Task Force, said Dr. Khatib.

The Task Force's technical committee is studying proposals by firms concerning the provision of integrated services once the first stage of services becomes operational towards the end of 1993, he pointed out.

Dr. Khatib said the committee is also involved in evaluating the achievements thus far, as well as the medical equipment that is to be installed prior to launching the first stage of services.

AVIS A TOUS LES CITOYENS CANADIENS RÉSIDANT EN JORDANIE

LA SECTION CONSULAIRE DE L'AMBASSADE DU CANADA A RÉCEMENT ENVOYÉ UNE LETTRE A TOUS (TE) LES CANADIENS(NE)S EN JORDANIE QUI SONT ACTUELLEMENT INSCRIT(E)S DANS NOTRE REGISTRE A L'AMBASSADE. SI VOUS N'AVEZ PAS RECU UNE TELLE LETTRE, VOUS ET VOTRE FAMILLE N'ÊTES PAS INSCRITS A L'AMBASSADE.

NOUS PRIONS TOUT CANADIEN RÉSIDANT EN JORDANIE QUI N'A PAS RECU UNE TELLE LETTRE DE CONTACTER L'AMBASSADE DU CANADA, SECTION CONSULAIRE, SHMEISANI, AMMAN, SOIT EN PERSONNE, SOIT PAR ÉCRIT (CP 815403, AMMAN) POUR VOUS INSCRIRE DES QUE POSSIBLE.

Attention all Canadian citizens residing in Jordan

The consular section of the Canadian Embassy in Amman has recently sent letters to all Canadians in Jordan who are currently registered with the embassy.

If you have not received such a letter, you and your family are not registered with the embassy.

All Canadians residing in Jordan who did not receive such a letter are urged to contact the Canadian Embassy, Consular Section, Shmeisani, Amman either personally or in writing (P.O. Box 815403, Amman) to register at your earliest convenience.

Jordan Times

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Big Brother, good friend

U.S. PRESIDENT Bill Clinton used for Mr. Boris Yeltsin the same words that his predecessor, George Bush, used for Saddam Hussein in the intervention in the Gulf following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In an answer to a question by a T.V. reporter, Clinton said that he supported Russian President Yeltsin because the latter's survival was essential for preserving the American "way of life." In the lengthy interview with that reporter, Clinton went into a lengthy argument to back his theory that Yeltsin's quest for near-absolute power was in the interest of the American people as well as American businesses. The U.S. president even suggested a nationalist Russia would be bad news for the U.S.

The world, including good Americans — who voted Clinton in — had hoped that the return to power of liberal democrats like Clinton would change America's foreign posture from a Republican-led aggressive power into one that would not only care for the welfare of its citizens but for the good of all the peoples of the "global village." Instead we hear nearly the same lines being repeated and the same policies pursued regarding Russia, Somalia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Russia and the Russians, it is true, appear to be neither communist nor nationalist, since it is probably too soon for them to decide on a final political future after the huge change from communism. But any policy by any country that does not address the interests of the U.S. and satisfy the American way of life — whatever that is — seems to be either communist or nationalist to the Americans.

Russia, the U.S. has to remember, has chosen by its own will to rid itself of communism and is in the midst of defining its future. The people of Russia have endured under the totalitarian regime of the Communist Party and are determined to ensure that they will not replace that regime with an autocratic one. Russia therefore should be allowed to decide its own future as long as the process is being conducted within the framework of that country's democratic and economic liberalisation process as well as its international obligations.

For the president of the U.S. to make pronouncement reminiscent of those that led to American intervention in the Gulf is scary. If everytime "the American way of life" is threatened the U.S. flexes its muscles, people will see little hope of enduring peace as in fact nationalist movements all over the world try to assert their own interests.

The interests of the U.S. cannot be as easily determined as by drawing a straight line.

For not only through cheap oil and open market could the U.S. way of life be preserved. The more other peoples advance towards a better life the better U.S. businesses and interests will be served. The harder Russia and Third World countries are pushed against the wall the higher the degree of risk for American interests. The well-being of the inner city dwellers of America is certainly not more important than the well-being of the dwellers of shanty towns in either Cairo or Rio. The U.S. should stop behaving like Big Brother and for a change should try the role of a good friend.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I daily Saturday said that the Arabs should stop relying on the United Nations Security Council to help implement Resolution 242 and 338 saying that the occupied Arab lands can be returned to their legitimate owners through these resolutions. The world organisation, said the paper, has failed to force the Israelis to implement U.N. Resolution 799, which calls for the repatriation of Palestinian expellees to South Lebanon or respect the international legitimacy. For this reason, there can be no hope for the Arabs to see their usurped lands returned to them. On the other hand, said the paper, and while Israel escapes any punishment for scoffing at the U.N. resolution, the Iraqi people are forced to comply with resolutions which are humiliating to them and causing them so much sufferings. Not a single voice has yet come out from Washington, London, Paris, Peking or Moscow demanding that Israel implement Resolution 799 or any others while these capitals continue to hold on to the so-called world legitimacy with regard to Iraq, added the daily. The paper said that the Palestinian resistance fighters and the Iraqi people deserve solidarity from the Arabs while they continue to fall victims to the world legitimacy and continue to suffer as a result of injustice.

Sawt Al Shaab daily commented on the Arab foreign ministers meetings scheduled for Sunday in Damascus to discuss the expellees question and the prospect of resuming the peace process with Israel. There is no doubt that the Arab countries involved in the Damascus meeting are keen on ending the current deadlock in the peace process by helping to remove all the obstacles in its path, said the daily. But, it said, these obstacles have been placed by Israel and not by the Arabs or the Palestinians who have declared their willingness to resume the negotiations in Washington next month on the condition that Israel renounces its expulsion policy. In the light of the Damascus meeting and the pledges that would be given to the Palestinian delegation in Washington, the Arab states are bound to decide whether to go ahead with the negotiations, said the daily. What the Arabs must demand, said the paper, is an end to Israel's acts of terrorism and repressive measures like detention, demolition of homes and killing of the Arabs as a condition for resuming the negotiations with the Israelis. The paper said that the peace negotiations should aim at achieving peace and must not be exploited by Israel as a cover for continuing its atrocities against the Palestinian people.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Al Fanek

Sustainable growth, at last

HIGH GROWTH is not new to the Jordanian economy, but the previous high growth rate was superficial. It was induced by external factors such as Arab and foreign aid, remittances and loans. Now, we have a high economic growth of which, at least, half is sustainable. For the first time in a decade, the economy is growing at a faster pace than the population, thus improving the standard of living which was deteriorating steadily.

No one expects the Jordanian economy to grow at a double digit rate in real terms for many years. Such high growth is hard to come by in any country. Yet a growth rate of 10 per cent in 1993 is by no means ruled out.

How did Jordan manage this economic boom against all odds, and why was this growth more real than the expansion of the seventies and early eighties?

This time the external favourable factors have been accompanied by more important internal homework. It is true that Jordan received a lot of foreign aid in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis. But this time Jordan's internal house is set in order, and both the economic and political reforms are working and gaining momentum, hand in hand.

It is the internal reforms that should get the credit for the major part of the flow of foreign exchange into the country. Without public confidence, capital flight would not have been stopped, let alone reversed, expatriates would not be sending most of their earnings back home, and returnees would not be repatriating more and more of their savings to finance new investments in the country.

Foreign aid is of course crucial for the well-being of the Jordanian economy, at least during the coming five years. But foreign aid alone would not do the trick. It is no use putting money into a pocket with holes. It takes a healthy economy, a political democracy and real public participation to ensure dynamism and sustainability.

The success of the structural economic adjustment process in accordance with an International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved programme not only induced foreign aid, and made reduction of the foreign debt burden possible, it also spurred confidence in the economy and convinced entrepreneurs to start all kinds of new investments in construction, tourism, manufacturing and agricultural sectors and in a wide range of services.

This time the growth is not artificial, there are enough signs that growth will continue. Uncertainties are still abundant, but they are not all on the negative side. In fact the future may give Jordan more opportunities to grow and consolidate its present economic achievements.

Economic relations with Iraq, our main trading partner, will definitely be normalised sooner or later, which will create a jump in exports.

The peace process may come to a fruitful conclusion, which will give rise to foreign and Arab investments and give the Jordanian economy a push forward.

There is a risk, however, that we may become less committed to the adjustment programme, think that the job is already finished and that we can resume living beyond our means. As things stand now, there is no guarantee that we may not have a set-back, returning the country to its old practices, such as increased domination by the public sector, and allowing more deficits in the budget and the current account of the balance of payments.

The reason why we think that Jordan has not yet crossed the point of no return to the old ways is that our popular politicians, in the government and the opposition alike, are not yet ready to announce their final commitment to economic reform. They still prefer to criticise the programme and its measures even when they are allowing it to take its course. Moreover, public opinion is not yet sold on the programme and the official media are not interested in shouldering the difficult mission.

The crisis over the expellees

A rationale for suspending the peace talks?

By Mouin Rabbani

WHEN MEMBERS of the Israeli cabinet hinted that their unprecedented expulsion of 400 suspected Hamas sympathisers enjoyed the tacit approval of Palestinians aligned with the Palestine Liberation Organisation, they were roundly condemned for failing to understand that forcible expulsion is probably the most emotive issue among Palestinians and that it is opposed as a matter of national principle rather than exploited for factional purposes. Similarly, statements by complicit Meretz leaders that the expulsions would strengthen the peace process and facilitate the opening of a direct dialogue between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) were ridiculed as opportunistic ravings by a power-hungry clique hopelessly alienated from reality.

Nevertheless, such views did contain an inadvertent element of truth. While fiercely opposed to the expulsions, virtually all Palestinians were relieved that Israel had finally furnished them with an appropriate instrument to expose the futility of the negotiating process, underline the partisan role of the United States, and thus justify a unilateral suspension of negotiations until more equitable terms materialise.

In other words, the crisis occasioned by the expulsions was, in view of the consistent frustration endured by the Palestinians since October 1991, one which was waiting to happen and requiring only a convincing provocation. And significantly, it was Yitzhak Rabin who made it all possible; his predecessor, determined to keep the Palestinians and Arab states shackled to the negotiating table until the West Bank and Gaza Strip had been "irreversibly" colonised, might never have provided the PLO with a plausible rationale for suspending the peace process.

What can the Palestinians hope for?

The primary question, therefore, concerns the substantive changes the Palestinians hope to achieve and their prospects for

achieving them. At the most basic level, the current political struggle between Israel and the Palestinians is about the relationship between the negotiations and the imperative of international legitimacy. The Palestinians are insisting that the negotiations be guided by and subordinated to the will of the international community as represented by the Fourth Geneva Conventions, various United Nations resolutions and similar documents, whereas Israel is determined to keep the two divorced from each other so as to consign the latter to irrelevance.

The main battles fought so far in this regard, namely those over United Nations and European Community participation in the negotiations and enforcement of Security Council Resolution 799 (to say nothing of the "Madrid formula"), have been settled decisively in Israel's favour. In the most recent example, the Palestinian defeat was so overwhelming that Mr. Rabin felt sufficiently confident to publicly boast that his bilateral deal with the U.S. upheld his "right" to engage in further expulsion. Under such circumstances, any Palestinian return to the negotiating table would be suicidal; it would endorse the total exclusion of the international community and

pillar of its Middle East policy unravel.

Unfortunately, however, this is as unlikely to materialise as it was in 1984 or has been ever since.

Thus, the Palestinians are very much on their own, and have little to look forward to, not even, it seems, a renewal of their "dialogue of the deaf" with a minor State Department functionary. Similarly, on the Israeli front, the rise of Hamas has not yet, and is most unlikely to, lead to an Israeli-PLO dialogue. After all, if Israel's purpose is to avoid making concessions on the occupied territories rather than crush Palestinian militancy, it has little to fear from Hamas and everything to gain from an eclipsed PLO. And if it seeks to do both, mass expulsions of Islamic militants, summary executions of the nationalist activists and continued political deadlock serve its purposes equally well.

Their only weapon

Yet, paradoxically, the Palestinians' main — perhaps only — available weapon is in fact their suspension of the negotiations. If threats that the Palestinians would be mercilessly hounded throughout the Middle East if they refused to attend the Madrid conference on American terms held true in the immediate after-

the Jordanian case the question does not even arise.

It seems that the PLO has basically two options. The first is to confine itself to a symbolic boycott and then rejoin the process as to prevent further isolation and achieve an interim self-governing arrangement which would restore at least some of its freedom of manoeuvre. The second would be to hold out for a substantive modification of the terms under which negotiations are being conducted. Such terms would include the unconditional return of all the remaining expellees; explicit linkage between Israeli conduct and international standards of decency on the one hand and between the contents of the negotiations and international legitimacy on the other; a less partisan role on the part of the United States and a greater one for the international community; and a final unveiling of the PLO's central role in the process by Mr. Clinton and Mr. Rabin.

A less charitable interpretation would pose the choice as one between Saudi petrodollars and Palestinian rights. In either case, if the PLO opts for the former option, it will probably split its own ranks, undermine the intifada, lose members of its own delegation, and soon thereafter run into an iron wall of permanent occupation which even Jabotinsky would envy. If it opts for the second, it will either succeed and be in a position to fulfill Palestinian national aspirations; partially succeed and at least be in a better position than at present with some options worth considering and Palestinian national unity fortified; or (rather unlikely) simply remain outside the negotiating process and attempt to escalate the uprising in the face of increasing repression. But given that the world and the peace process cannot simply ignore the Palestinians and what Israel does to them because they have absented themselves from Washington, this is hardly the worst conceivable scenario. And sooner or later, the stone-throwing youths who first set this process in motion would again force its reconsideration.

Middle East International

Committee reaches compromise on children's religious freedoms

From Waleed Sadi in New York

THE UNITED Nations Human Rights Committee (HRC), charged with the mandate of monitoring the application of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), concluded Tuesday its consideration of Paragraph 4 of Article 8 on parental control of children's religious or moral education with a view to interpreting it for state parties.

This paragraph stipulates that "state parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own conviction."

As expected, the debate that ensued over this thorny and controversial provision was long and heated, reflecting the lack of clear consensus in the 18-member committee on the exact construction of the purview as well as the

extent of parental control over their children's religious and moral education.

The division between the expert members was over the clash between this part of Article 18 and its earlier provisions that enshrined the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Paragraph 1 of the famous article 18 of the covenant states that "everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching."

Several Western experts in the HRC attempted to strike a balance between the principle of freedom of religion and thought with the need to educate children in the faith of their parents. Some voiced concern at the risk of coercing children in the process of teaching the religion of their

parents, which effectively denied the freedom to choose their own faith. Others thought that paragraph 4 was clear as to the liberty of parents to control the religious and moral education of their children and expressed doubts as to the ability of children to object to such teachings, especially at their tender years.

At the end, committee members were able to arrive at a compromise along the following lines: "The liberty of parents or legal guardians to ensure that their children receive a religious and moral education in conformity with their own convictions set forth in Article 18(4) is related to the guarantee of the freedom to teach a religion or belief stated in Article 18(1), unless provisions are made for non-discriminatory exemptions or alternatives."

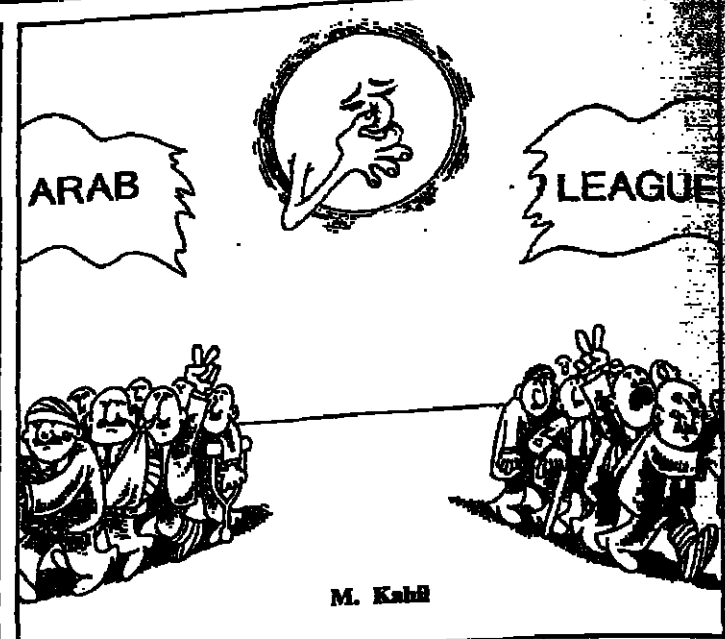
However, the committee is of the view that Article 18(4) per-

mits public school instruction in subjects such as general history of religion and ethics if it is given in a neutral and objective manner. This is in substance the consensus that emerged from the HCR debate over the issue that ended Tuesday.

The critical controversy arose over compulsory religious education. There were members who wanted to outlaw it while others thought that the real world is not about to accept such a drastic interpretation. The compromise involved the inclusion of a provision for exemptions and alternatives should there be compulsory religious education.

There were attempts to include private schools in the committee's ruling but there was much opposition to their inclusion since parents have the ultimate choice of sending their children to such schools or not.

The writer is an HRC member.



Arab League at 48

Little to celebrate

By Pascal B. Karmy

MARCH 22 marked the 48th anniversary of the establishment of the League of Arab States. Has the league, during its life of nearly half a century, achieved the aims and objectives for which it was established? Or has it faltered and failed to realise the expectations and national aspirations of the Arab peoples? We shall try to answer these questions.

The initiative for the creation of the Arab League came from Egypt, when, in the middle of August 1943, it invited Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan and North Yemen to send delegations for consultations with regard to Arab unity. In September and October 1944, the preparatory committee of the Pan-Arab Conference held several sessions during which it considered the political conditions of the Arab states and the various forms of unity sought, including a federal union.

On Sept. 7, 1944 the committee signed the Alexandria Protocol. The latter charged a sub-committee to prepare the text of a charter which was finally adopted on March 22, 1945 at the first summit of the above-mentioned states. The charter came into effect on May 11, 1945.

The charter of the league fell short of federalism or a union of the Arab states. It is rather one of co-operation among "sovereign states" and nothing more. It did not fulfil the national aspirations of the Arab peoples, apparently because those aspirations expected from the league were beyond the capacity and authority which the league could obtain from its members.

The present members of the Arab League include all Arab states. Since 1964, a representative of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has sat as a full member representing Palestine.

The aims of the Arab League are detailed in its charter. But its primary aim is to defend the interests of the member states in particular and the interests of the Arabs in general. Each member state enjoys full sovereignty and equality with other members while the league has certain limited powers conferred upon it by the charter.

Since 1945 and up to the Camp David agreement between Egypt and Israel in 1979, the secretary-general was always an Egyptian. The then secretary-general, the late Mahmoud Riad, resigned on his own accord on that date, apparently because of his disagreement with the Camp David agreement. He was replaced by Shadii Qulaybi of Tunisian nationality. Moreover the seat of the Arab League was moved from Cairo to Tunis because Egypt's membership was suspended at the Baghdad conference held in March 1979 following the Camp David agreement.

After reconciliation with Egypt, thanks to the initiative of His Majesty King Hussein, the league's seat was returned to Cairo and the present secretary-general is again an Egyptian in the person of Mr. Ismat Abdul Mejid. Mr. Shadii Qulaybi resigned at the beginning of the Gulf crisis.

It should be remembered that no sooner was the Arab League established than it had to deal with one of the most difficult and intricate problems, namely the Palestine conflict. The league was also created at a time when most of the Arab states were either newly independent or were still under Western colonialism.

The Arab League has endeavoured to play a role in international politics as it has a permanent representative at the United Nations and has contributed there to the decolonisation of many countries which were under European rule. It has affirmed non-alignment within the Non-Aligned Movement and encouraged Afro-Arab co-operation based on common interests. It helped create the PLO in 1964, and approved its constitution. It has defended the rights of the Palestinians in international forums and con-

ferences. The league also has wide-ranging activities. There are at present 21 specialised agencies within the league's orbit, including the Arab Postal Union, the Arab Union for Telecommunications, the Arab Organisation for Crimes, the Arab Organisation for Administrative Sciences, the Arab Monetary Fund and the Arab Satellite Communications. It is true that the Arab League failed to achieve Arab unity and has not been able to cope with the external threats to the Arab states. However, it was and still is incumbent upon the Arab states themselves to enhance the power and prestige of the league instead of simply absolving themselves of responsibility for failures in the world political arena, and throwing these it upon the league, forgetting their own invertebrate divisions and parochial conflicts.

The Arab states themselves should help energise the league's activities so that it will stand as the symbol of Arab will, determination and unity in the face of the so-called new world order in which the weak will be subdued if not annihilated.

The Arab states have many things and elements in common: language, religion, culture, traditions, a shared history and struggle against imperialism. Moreover, Arab states have before them the glaring example of the European Community (EC) states which, notwithstanding their differences in many fields and the internecine wars they waged against each other for hundreds of years, now co-operate together and speak as one voice in international forums.

The Arab states themselves should help energise the leagues activities so that it will stand as the symbol of the Arab will... in the face of the so-called new world order.

The EC constitutes one of the three important economic units in the world, competing with the U.S. and Japan. The Arab states should discard parochialism and unite to face the challenges of our modern world which respects the strong and the mighty and treads upon the weak and the pusillanimous.

A new era has dawned upon the world with one single power which tries to affect the destinies of peoples. It therefore behooves the Arab states to coalesce to parry external threats and aggressions on the Arab peoples and to enable them to force Israel to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territory. It is high time for the Arab states to remove their boundaries in the face of Arab citizens travelling from one Arab state to another.

The Arab League should be active to achieve this end. In this regard we should emulate the EC countries, where, for example, a German citizen can travel from his country to Belgium, Holland and Britain and back without any or minimal checking or hindrances on the borders of those countries. While an Arab citizen travelling from an Arab state to another has to submit to various checkings and to perform all kinds of formalities, all of which discourage him from embarking on such a voyage. Indeed, in my experience it is much easier and smoother to travel by land say from Australia to Germany, France and England and back than to travel from an Arab country to another. Is not this irrational?

Pascal B. Karmy is an Amman-based writer. He contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

Assad hedges on peace talks

(Continued from page 1)
regardless of whether the Palestinians did, Mr. Assad did not answer directly but told a news conference the basis for the 17-month-old peace process was comprehensive peace involving all parties.

"We set out from the beginning in the direction of complete peace and there is no confusion or obscurity in this orientation. It is confirmed in documents agreed by all parties, especially the Americans in their role as initiators," he said.

"We Arabs are one nation whatever (different) points of view there are among us and in the end, we must be with those Arabs who have suffered aggression," he added.

His comments left open the possibility that Syria and other Arab negotiators could draw a distinction between resuming talks with the Jewish state and actually reaching separate agreements, something they unambiguously reject.

The foreign ministers of Syria, Egypt, Jordan and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official Farouk Kaddoumi as well as chief Palestinian negotiator Haidar Abdel Shafi are due to meet in Damascus Sunday to discuss whether to attend the talks but Arab diplomats suggested they might not reach a final decision.

"Overall head of the Palestinian delegation Faisal Al Hussein was in Washington this week trying to persuade the Clinton administration to pressure Israel into making further concessions."

So far, he appears to have made little headway.

The United States and Israel reject any concessions beyond what they offered in January, immediate return for a quarter of the expelled and return of the rest by the end of the year.

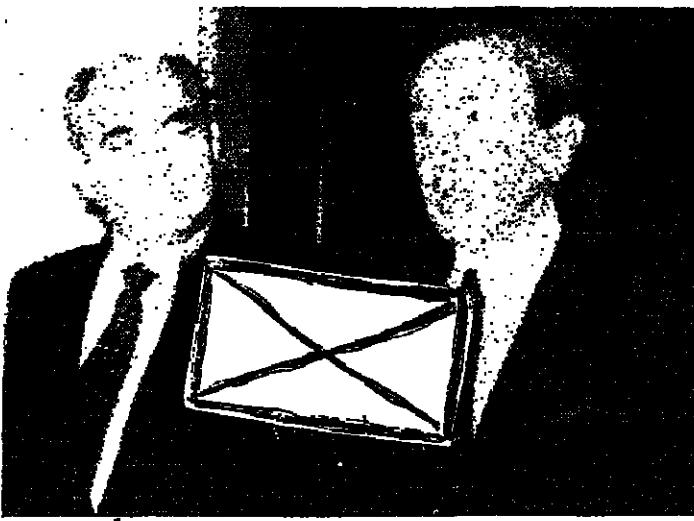
Mr. Assad met Mr. Mubarak for over four hours, later flying back to Damascus. It was the third meeting this year between the Syrian and Egyptian presidents, who have developed a pivotal relationship in the Arab approach to peace talks.

Both countries have argued that the expellees issue should not hold up peace talks, putting pressure on Palestinian negotiators to settle for less than a total solution.

A diplomat said before the meeting the two men would also discuss points Mr. Mubarak might raise in his meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton next week, such as whether Washington would remove Syria from its list of states sponsoring "terrorism."

Mr. Mubarak and Mr. Assad told the joint news conference they discussed obstacles to the peace process and the Damascus declaration, an aid-for-security plan agreed in principle with Gulf states after the 1991 war over Kuwait.

In Washington, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said Friday Palestinians would be able to secure their political rights only through negotiations. But Mr. Hussein said he needed to be sure some obstacles had been removed.



U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher (right) Friday talks to reporters before meeting with Faisal Hussein, leader of the Palestinian delegation to peace talks with Israel (AFP photo)

He cited Israel's actions on the West Bank and the expellee crisis.

Mr. Christopher, welcoming Mr. Hussein and the delegation to the State Department, said: "Far too many people have been killed, from the Israeli population and from the Palestinians."

He said negotiations offered the only chance for a settlement. Violence "may make negotiations slightly more tense, but it makes them even more important," Mr. Christopher said.

Mr. Hussein declined to confirm the Palestinian delegation would attend the April meetings. "Actually it is not a matter of whether we will attend or (will) not attend it's a matter of whether we can remove some obstacles which are there."

On the eve of the meeting, the Palestinians appeared to be showing significant flexibility, the AP reported from Damascus.

After flatly rejecting the invitation to the April 20 talks, Dr. Abdul Shafi offered a compromise Saturday.

Dr. Abdul Shafi, the first to arrive in Damascus for the meeting, said the Palestinians would go to Washington if they "receive a pledge from Israel that there will be no future expulsion of Palestinians."

He told the Associated Press that Israel also must commit itself to repatriating the expellees "within a time frame not exceeding June."

Mr. Mubarak was sending his foreign minister, Amr Musa, to Damascus to join his counterparts Farouk Al Sharara of Syria, Fabis Buz of Lebanon, Kamel Abu Jaber of Jordan and the PLO's Kaddoumi.

For Sarajevo's women, front line and home front blur into one

By David Cray
Associated Press

SARAJEVO — Some serve in combat units. Others have found themselves suddenly working as nurses, relief workers and rape counsellors.

For Sarajevo's women, the front line and the home front blur into one.

"They're supposed to be a good mother, a good spouse, a good housewife and a good soldier," said Pava Barisic, head of the Bosnian Red Cross. "It's hard for them."

Before the war broke out a year ago, women say, wide opportunities were open to them. Many of the city's doctors, professors and office managers were women.

But the war has posed tough new choices for the estimated 50 per cent of Sarajevo's women who have not fled.

Some have opted for a life geared to survival, huddling at home most of the day, venturing out only for water, food or fuel. Others volunteer as soldiers, nurses, aid workers, rape counsellors.

"I sat around for the first couple of weeks of war, then decided

I would go crazy if I didn't do something," said Liba Berdarevic, 44, a former corporate secretary who is now an aide to the army commander in the embattled suburb of Dobrinja.

"It's given me the feeling that I have some control over my life," she said.

Serifa Bizdarevic also takes pride in her new job cleaning floors at the army's 1st corps headquarters. The danger of enemy shellfire doesn't faze her.

"If our boys can go to the front line, why should I be afraid here?" she said. "They're defending me and my family."

Jasna Mufic worked for the academy of fine arts before the siege. Now she heads a commission trying to help victims of rape by Serb forces, who went to war over Bosnia's secession from Serb dominated Yugoslavia.

"Rape has been the biggest problem for Bosnian women," she said. "They try to avoid talking about it. They feel ashamed, so they stop coming to hospitals and they get illegal abortions."

Her group is seeking safe abortions for rape victims and local adoptions for unwanted children of women who give birth.

"These are our children, no matter how they were born," Mrs. Mufic said. "We don't want them exported for adoption abroad."

In Dobrinja, a high rise was zone virtually cut off from the rest of Sarajevo, women have formed committees to cook and knit caps for front line soldiers.

"Before the war, people in Dobrinja hardly knew each other," said Vahida Smajkic, who knitted 100 caps. "It's turned into a big family. We are mothers to all the sons in Dobrinja. They are all our children."

Despite the deprivations of siege, many Sarajevo women retain a strong sense of style. Somehow, they obtain lipstick and makeup. A row of hitchhikers or a bread line almost always includes a woman who could have stepped out of a fashion magazine.

"It's a spirit of defiance," Mrs. Barisic said. "They want to look good. They don't want people to feel sorry for them."

Many young single women, their educations and social lives disrupted, have found war related jobs.

Srebrenka Tredinjac, 33, who still dreams of finishing medical

school, is a nurse with a front line army unit, one of four women with more than 100 men. Sabrin Konjodovic, 21, completed nursing school only because of pressure from her parents and became a store clerk, but now she's serving with an ambulance team. "I'm glad to do something to help," she said.

For older women, the war has turned husbands and sons into fighters. Mrs. Denderovic recalled seeing her 19-year-old son Faruk, after they had been separated for the first five months of the war.

In her mind, he was as she has last seen him: A young man with a pony tail she hated and dirty old jeans. But the man with whom she was reunited did not fit the description at all.

"The person who approached me was tall, with short hair wearing a uniform, all in black looking older," she said. "There was a fighter standing in front of me."

"Everybody who was present was staring at me, expecting me to cry," she continued. "But when this man approached me and lifted me up, I felt nothing else but pride."

Hardliners fail in anti-Yeltsin bid

(Continued from page 1)

ter Viktor Chernomyrdin should meet for a week to try and resolve the power struggle paralyzing Russia.

"The people, who are confronting each other outside these doors, will calm down, we shall calm down and get down to normal work," Mr. Yeltsin said.

Previous rounds of talks have failed to narrow the gap between the president and parliament chief.

Deputies did not reach any decision on a draft resolution to suspend a decree issued by Mr. Yeltsin last week, assuming special powers to force a national vote on who rules Russia.

Mr. Yeltsin, who was absent during the morning session, asked for an hour's recess so he could study this resolution, which also called for the sacking of his closest aides and representatives in the regions.

When deputies refused, he went to the rostrum. He accused congress of seeking confrontation rather than accord. He said he, the parliament and the government and all made mistakes and bore responsibility for the crisis.

"We have enough material to prove that the Supreme Soviet (parliament) overstepped the constitution more than 300 times."

"I don't think this is standard, but we are a young democracy and it should be taken into consideration," he said.

He defended his close aides, but agreed that some of them should be changed.

"I don't understand why only the president's entourage are mentioned — not that of the chairman of the Supreme Soviet, nor anyone else's. These people work according to their duties and conscientiously."

Hardliners at the emergency session were trying to turn the

referendum, originally proposed by Mr. Yeltsin, to their advantage by including a question on whether Russians support the president's economic reforms. Mr. Yeltsin's advisers said the question was "provocative" and designed to elicit a negative response.

In a nationwide television address one week ago, Mr. Yeltsin proposed the referendum to resolve the power struggle.

Mr. Yeltsin also announced on March 20 the imposition of "special rule," in which his decrees would take precedence over the lawmakers. But when he formally issued his decree on Wednesday, it did not include any reference to "special rule."

The attempt to oust Mr. Yeltsin during the second day of an emergency session of congress came despite acknowledgements by hardliners that they did not have the necessary support. Such a move would take a two-thirds majority, or 689 votes.

"After the president's political suicide, the congress also committed political suicide by refusing to consider removing the president," hardline lawmaker Sergei Badurin angrily told reporters after the vote failed.

Mr. Khasbulatov on Friday came out against removing the president, although he had previously said there were "clear grounds" for impeachment.

Mr. Yeltsin wants the April 25 referendum to include just two questions: Whether the people have confidence in him, and whether they have confidence in the congress. He has said he hopes a referendum will lead to a new constitution and replacement of the congress with a bicameral legislature.

Hardliners at first opposed holding any referendum. But support for a nationwide vote clearly is mounting, and Mr. Yeltsin's



Boris Yeltsin

opponents apparently have decided to try to use the balloting against the president.

They were pushing at the congress Saturday for the ballot to include four questions. In addition to the issue of confidence in the president, they want to ask whether new presidential and legislative elections should be held this year, and whether voters support Mr. Yeltsin's "course of social economic reforms."

Many Russians who have seen their lives worsen under Mr. Yeltsin's free-market reforms would probably find it difficult to answer "yes." If voters said they did not support the reforms, it would strengthen the position of hardliners who want to reverse or slow down Mr. Yeltsin's policies.

Mr. Yeltsin meanwhile has accepted an invitation to attend a Group of Seven industrialised nations summit meeting in Tokyo in July, his press service said.

A statement signed by spokesman Anatoly Krasikov said Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa had invited Mr. Yeltsin to join other world leaders at the meeting.

"Boris Yeltsin expressed his gratitude for this invitation and said he was ready to take part in the meeting," the statement said.

1 killed in Cairo bomb blast

(Continued from page 1)

were blown off, and they suffered serious wounds to the face and chest.

"There was a huge explosion. The building shook," said Mr. Abu Sreia, who works on the floor above the police. "There was panic. Everyone rushed from the building."

"Later I looked in the office where the explosion happened, and it was pretty badly damaged. There was glass all over the place."

Police blocked entry to the building, to all except investigators. On the sidewalk and blocked narrow street outside, police conscripts swept away glass shards from the shattered windows of the room where the explosion occurred. That was the only sign of damage.

It was the third bomb in a month in downtown Cairo. The other two were on Tahrir Square, about one kilometre from Atada. On Feb. 26, a device went off in a coffee shop, killing a Swede, a Turk and an Egyptian and injuring more than 15 people. A March 16 explosion beneath a bus outside the Egyptian National Museum damaged six buses but caused no injuries.

In the southern city of Assiut, a hothead of Muslim militants, a member of the extremist Al Gamaa Al Islamiya (Islamic Group) indicated his organisation had a hand in Saturday's attack.

At least 116 people have been killed and 220 injured over the last year as the militants have attacked police, Christians and tourists and the security forces have hit back with increasingly ruthless raids.

AMMAN — Despite the restrictive macro-economic policies pursued by almost all countries of the Western Asia region, governments have continued to give priority to the food and agriculture sector. The gap between production and consumption is still widening, resulting in continued dependence on external supply sources to satisfy a fast-growing demand, according to a publication issued jointly by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

The publication added that in 1990, the gross domestic product (GDP) of Western Asia decreased by about 3 per cent compared to 1989. The Gulf crisis had a direct, negative impact on the economies of many countries of the region — especially Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen. Adverse weather conditions, a shortage of available water for irrigation and persistent problems of desertification and of the misuse of the area's fragile natural resource base have contributed to a sharp decrease in the volume of agricultural production.

According to the ESCWA/FAO publication, the agricultural population constituted 34 per cent of total population in the ESCWA region (122.3 million in 1990), while its contribution to the GDP represents 10.1 per cent, or \$26.8 billion (1989).

In 1990, the value of agricultural imports for the ESCWA countries totalled \$17.3 billion, while ESCWA agricultural exports amounted to \$2.6 billion, leaving a deficit in the agricultural balance of trade of \$14.7 billion. Moreover, agricultural imports amounted to 25 per cent of total exports. These figures reflect ESCWA's countries dependence on imports for food supply, caused by rising consumption, which in turn results in a decrease in exportable agriculture surplus.

Agricultural production in the region is still constrained by the lack of adequate economic incentives for producers, deficient pricing policies, weak and inadequate government research institutions, and extension, credit and marketing services, and above all the continued misuse and degradation of national resources in many countries. During the last few years, some progress has been made in the agricultural sector. The cultivated area has been expanded, irrigation and drainage facilities have been constructed and liberalisation and privatisation policies in the production and marketing of agricultural products have been implemented. In 1989, ESCWA's total cultivated area was estimated at 17 million hectares — Syria and Iraq had the largest recorded cultivated areas. The irrigated area in the ESCWA region was estimated at 6.7 million hectares, or 40 per cent of the total cultivated area, says the publication.

In 1990, GDP for the whole region decreased by 3 per cent, attributable mainly to the Gulf crisis. While Iraq and Kuwait had the most dramatic decreases in GDP, Saudi Arabia and Syria had a GDP increase of 10 per cent and 6 per cent respectively. The Gulf war caused Jordan a sharp, 8 per cent decrease in its GDP and a huge drop in remittances as a result of the deportation of Jordanians from the Gulf countries. The real GDP of both Iraq and Kuwait dropped by one third in 1990, seriously affecting the infrastructure in both countries. The embargo has also affected the supply of food to Iraq, making it scarce. This situation, coupled with high inflation in the country, has caused the inability of Iraqis to afford food, even when it is available. Egypt's economy has also been affected by the Gulf crisis; tourism, trade, and revenues from vessels passing through the Suez Canal have all

suffered significant losses.

The document recalls that throughout the 1980s, the ESCWA region achieved considerable growth in agricultural production, varying from 1.01 per cent in Iraq to 3.83 per cent in Egypt, and to about 22.64 per cent in Saudi Arabia. This increased agricultural production can mainly be attributed to the measures adopted in almost all the countries of the region: the implementation of economic-reform programmes geared towards liberalisation, privatisation, and the rationalisation of government intervention; encouraging agricultural investment and the exploitation of agricultural resources to increase self-sufficiency in strategic crops; liberalisation of agricultural pricing policies (in some countries); and an improved supply of agricultural inputs and increased credit services.

In spite of all these measures, most countries in the region registered a decrease in their total agricultural production index for 1991 compared to 1990, with the exception of Yemen and Jordan, whose growth rates were estimated at 6.31 per cent and 0.21 per cent, respectively. The overall decreases in growth rates were mainly due to the Gulf crisis (especially with respect to Iraq and Kuwait), as well as to unfavourable weather conditions that prevailed during the 1990/1991 season.

Average per capita food production varied in different countries of the region. During the periods 1981-1991, Saudi Arabia achieved 17.66 per cent increase in its per capita food production index, while Egypt's growth was 2.11 per cent. The rest of the countries experienced negative growth. Average per capita food production dropped in 1991 compared to 1990 in most of the countries, except Yemen.

According to the ESCWA/FAO publication, cereal production in the region registered a decrease of 3.83 per cent in 1991 compared to 1990, mainly due to diminished production in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. Iraq registered the worst decrease (64.01 per cent), while Lebanon experienced the slightest decrease (7.75 per cent). In the remaining countries growth was positive, with rates varying from 3.9 per cent in Syria to 10.9 per cent in Saudi Arabia.

Wheat production decreased by 0.14 per cent in the region as a whole, with Iraq registering the worst decrease (56 per cent). Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria witnessed an increase in wheat production. In 1990, the region of Western Asia achieved a general improvement in grain self-sufficiency. Production increased in comparison with 1989, and imports dropped considerably. As a result of this, the proportion of self-sufficiency rose from about 45.4 per cent in 1989 to about 51.3 per cent in 1990. The rise in grain production was due to increasing the planted area and was particularly marked in Iraq, Egypt and Syria. Saudi Arabia produced a huge surplus of wheat for export.

Enhancing sustainable agricultural development and achieving acceptable levels of growth in Western Asia is possible, and could be attained through the implementation of comprehensive programmes for water resources development and utilisation; agricultural research (especially in biotechnology); strengthening agricultural institutions (especially in the fields of extension and marketing credit). Economic cooperation among the countries of the region should also be strengthened, with the objective of increasing international trade and overall development. ESCWA Information Service.

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DAVIS CUP

Malaysia take 2-1 lead over Jordan

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Malaysia took a 2-1 lead over Jordan Saturday after winning the doubles match in their Asia/Oceania Zone Group 2 Davis Cup play-off, held at the Jordan Tennis Federation (JTF) courts at Al Hussein Youth City.

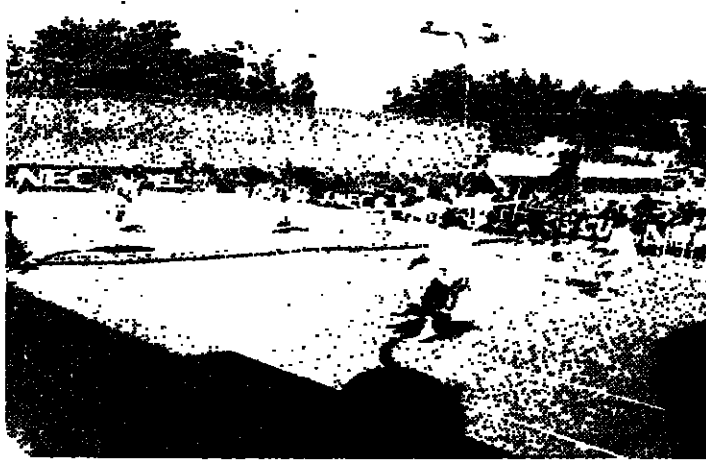
Clinching the doubles match would have given the Jordanian team a much needed sense of security prior to the final day of competition Sunday. However, Malaysia's Ramaya Ramachandran and Terence Chia seemed to have other plans as they beat Jordan's Hani Al Ali and Imad Abu Hamda 6-1, 6-3, 6-2.

The winner of the play-off will maintain a place in Group 2 while the loser will be relegated to Group 3 in 1994. Although Ali and Abu Hamda had given the Malaysians a hard time Friday, that was not the case in the disappointing doubles match, in which the visiting team clearly had the upper hand.

Malaysia took a 4-0 lead in the first set before Jordan's Ali managed to hold serve at 4-1. The Malaysians, whose serves were undisputedly more powerful, and had fewer unforced errors, won the first set 6-1.

Ali and Abu Hamda, who seemed to lack the cohesion of a doubles pair held serve in the fourth and sixth games of the second set, as Malaysia led 4-2. Ramachandran won the next game to lead 5-2.

As Jordan's No. 2 Abu



Malaysia's Terence Chia (far left) rushes to the net as Jordan's Hani Al Ali and Imad Abu Hamda (right) prepare to return (Photo by Abdullah Ayoub)

Hamda served, the match was held at serve for the first time. Abu Hamda managed to win the game as Jordan trailed 5-3.

Malaysia's Chia and Ramachandran rushed the net and hit powerful shots throughout the court as they sealed the second set 6-3.

Malaysia again took a 2-0 lead in the third set, but Ali and Abu Hamda held serve and for the first time in the match broke the Malaysians' serve to tie 2-2.

Nevertheless, the visiting team seemed determined to confirm their victory and managed to end the set 6-2, giving their team a 2-1 lead prior to Sunday's reverse singles.

In a post match statement to the Jordan Times senior tournament organizer Jamal Nafa' and team captain Dr.

Hanna Kavar voiced their surprise at the result of the match. "It was totally unexpected, but it goes to prove that the players need more training, especially for the doubles match."

Head coach Yusef Oreibi said the Malaysians had a more cohesive doubles team, however, he seemed hopeful for Sunday's singles matches. "I am still hopeful we can win this tie. The players are giving it all they have," he said.

The Kingdom's No. 1 Ali said he hoped everything will be well for Sunday's matches. "Although this is the best Davis Cup tie I've played, I think we are not well prepared to play a 5-set three-day event. We've won one battle and lost two. We have two more to win. It will be a tough day Sunday," Ali told the Jordan Times.

Australia knock U.S. out of Davis Cup

MELBOURNE (R) — Davis Cup champions the United States suffered a humiliating first round exit Saturday when old rivals Australia won the doubles in a five-set thriller and took an unbeatable 3-0 lead.

The below-strength Americans became the first defending champions to bow out of the cup's first round in 10 years as Australia's singles hero Mark Woodforde took his brilliant form into the doubles against Jim Grabb and Richey Reneberg.

The left-handed Woodforde, 27, who beat David Wheaton in four sets on Friday, linked up with Todd Woodbridge to score a 7-6 6-2 3-6 6-7 6-4 victory in three hours 20 minutes in overcast conditions.

The match between arguably the world's top doubles pairings was a nerve-jangling affair with the Americans battling back from two sets down to win a fourth set tiebreaker.

But Woodforde, who dropped his serve only once in the match, gave the Australians the edge in the final set and it was fitting he served out for the tie, wrapping it up when Reneberg hit a backhand drive well over the baseline.

Recalled to the cup squad after three years in the wilderness, Woodforde guided Woodbridge through an uncertain first set marked by a series of unforced errors on his backhand.

The Americans, who beat the Australian pair in last year's Wimbledon semifinals, seemed finished when they ran through the second set in only 29 minutes.

But the U.S. Open champions capitalized as the Australians relaxed. They took the third set by breaking Woodforde's serve in the vital ninth game.

The fourth set went to serve but the error-prone Woodbridge faltered on his service early in the tiebreak and the Americans won it with ease at 7-3.

The Australian pair, winners of the ATP World Doubles Championship last year, steadied in the final set and only needed one break on Grabb's serve in the fifth game to seal the match.

"I think we showed them we are equally as good on grass," Woodforde said of the rivalry which now shows a 4-2 record in the Australians' favor.

Australia and the U.S. are the two most successful nations in Davis Cup history but Saturday's triumph was only the third time the hosts have beaten the Americans in 20 years and avenges a loss in 1990 final.

But the U.S. were without world number one Jim Courier, number two Pete Sampras, Wimbledon champion Andre Agassi and Michael Chang who all opted to stay on the tournament circuit.

Veteran Brad Gilbert, ranked 30 in the world and the only



Stefan Edberg

American player with Davis Cup experience, lost the opening match of the tie to Wally Masur in four sets.

The Americans last lost their first three matches in a cup tie when they went down to Sweden in the 1984 final.

Australia now play quarter-finals against the winner of the first-round tie between Brazil and Italy, which the Italians are leading 2-0.

Despite the defeat the American team closed ranks around captain Tom Gorman, whose future has been the subject of media speculation since John McEnroe indicated he would like the job. Gorman has been in charge for eight years.

"I think Tom's done a fantastic job, he was very motivated and he deserves a lot of credit for keeping everyone pumped up," Reneberg said.

Gorman defended his team, saying: "I think the boys are very, very proud of what they did because they know they went down to the last point fighting."

Australian captain Neale Fraser said the top-seeded U.S. had paid the penalty of underestimating his team on grass.

"We didn't get seeded in the tournament and that was a bit rude," Fraser said. "To beat the number one seeds, what else can we do? Probably win it," he added.

Boetsch, Forget give France 2-0 lead over Austria: France are poised to cruise into the second round of this year's Davis Cup World Group after taking a 2-0 lead in the opening singles against Austria.

Arnaud Boetsch and Guy Forget both won their matches in straight sets, Boetsch beating Austria's Horst Skoff 6-2 7-6 6-1, and Forget demolishing Alex Antonitsch 6-4 6-2 6-3.

France could take the rubber when Forget joins up with Henri Leconte in the doubles against Antonitsch and Gerald Mandl.

The two Frenchmen teamed up in the doubles two years ago when France won the title against the United States.

Edberg gives Sweden edge over Cubans: Sweden's Davis Cup team were left basking in the rare luxury of a 2-0 lead after the opening singles matches of their first round tie against Cuba.

World number three Stefan Edberg disposed of the little-known Juan Pino 6-2 6-2 6-2, while Nicklas Kulti overcame a third set slump to beat Cuba's leading player Mario Tabares 6-3 6-0 4-6 6-3.

Germany lead despite Steeb scare: Carl-Uwe Steeb of Germany survived a major scare against Russia's Andrei Cherkasov Friday to earn his country a commanding 2-0 lead over their Moscow hosts.

The stocky German left-hander, ranked 29th in the world, led 4-2 in the first set but then lost nine successive games as Cherkasov built up a two-set lead in the battle of the baseliners.

The German's 4-6 1-6 6-4 7-6 6-4 victory was an epic four-hour tussle in front of some 10,000 spectators in Moscow's Olympic stadium.

They then witnessed a less prolonged duel between two serve-and-volleyers as Michael Stich made shorter work of Andrei Olkhovsky to win 7-5 6-1 1-6 7-5.

Italy took a 2-0 lead over Brazil: Italy took a big step towards avenging their quarter-final defeat last year by establishing a 2-0 cushion over Brazil in their Davis Cup world group first round tie Friday.

Diego Nargiso, 117th on the computer, made a mockery of the world rankings when he beat Jaime Oncins, 80 places above him, 7-5 6-2 6-3 before Omar Panfili defeated Luiz Mattar 7-6 4-6 6-2 6-1.

"The Davis Cup brings out all you have and the game today shows the rankings don't always tell the truth," Nargiso said.

Rockets clinch playoff spot

LANDOVER, Maryland (R) — The Houston Rockets used a smothering defense to return to their winning ways and clinch a playoff berth with a 90-69 rout of the Washington Bullets Friday.

The meagre 69-point total by the Bullets was the lowest in franchise history and the least points for a single game by any National Basketball Association team this season.

Vernon Maxwell scored 18 points to lead the Midwest Division-leading Rockets, who had lost three of their previous four games following a club-record 15-game winning streak.

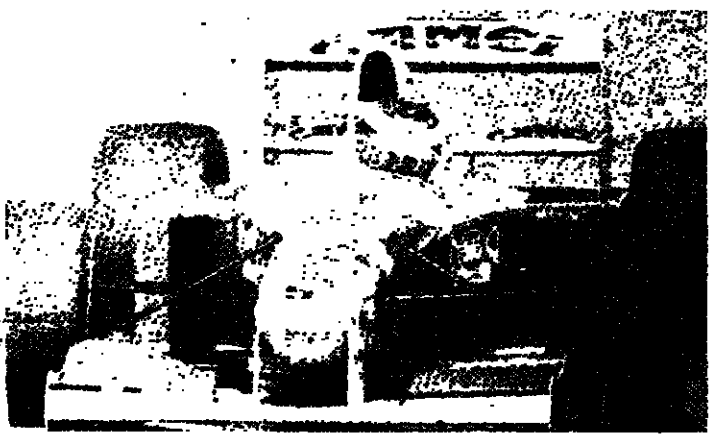
The Bullets' previous low was 71 against the New York Knicks in 1974.

In Phoenix, Charles Barkley had 31 points and 15 rebounds to pace the Phoenix Suns to a 109-103 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks.

Cedric Ceballos and Dan Majerje each added 18 points for Phoenix, which raised its record to a league-best 51-15.

The Bucks pulled within one point at 104-103 with 1:44 left. But the Suns ended the threat with four free throws by Danny Ainge and one by Barkley.

Scottie Pippen had 20 points and 13 rebounds and Michael Jordan added 18 to lead the streaking Chicago Bulls to their sixth straight win, a 107-86 victory over the Orlando Magic.



German Formula One driver Michael Schumacher of Benetton — Camel — Ford team drives through a turn on the Interlagos Race Track at the Brazilian Grand Prix (AFP photo)

Prost in provisional pole position in Brazil

SAO PAULO (R) — Frenchman Alain Prost drove superbly on the slippery and difficult Interlagos circuit Friday to claim provisional pole position for Sunday's Brazilian Grand Prix.

Prost, victorious in the season's first race in South Africa two weeks ago, finished more than a second ahead of second-placed Damon Hill of Britain, his Williams team mate.

Brazilian Ayrton Senna did all he could to extract the maximum performance from his McLaren but ended up nearly eight-tenths of a second behind Hill in third place.

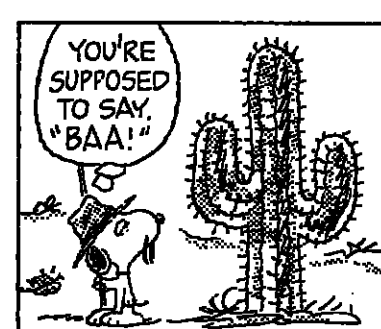
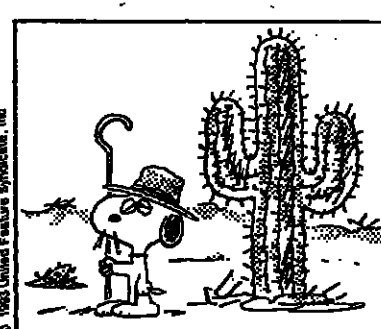
He will share the second row of the provisional grid with German Michael Schumacher, who was fourth in his Benetton.

Karl Wendlinger of Austria maintained the impressive form of the new Swiss Sauber team by

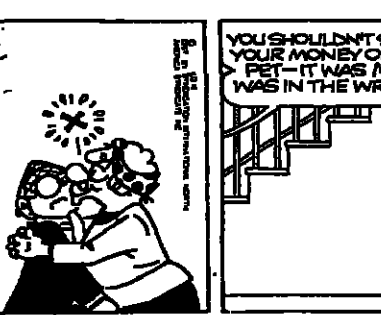
taking fifth place ahead of Frenchman Jean Alesi in a Ferrari.

Alesi's Ferrari team mate, Austrian Gerhard Berger, ended up in seventh place after a dramatic day.

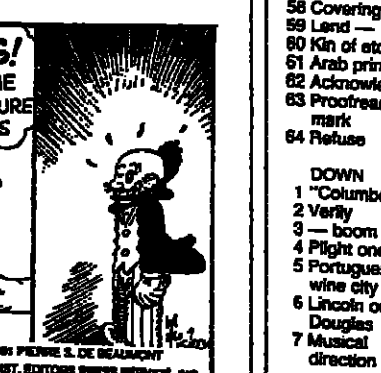
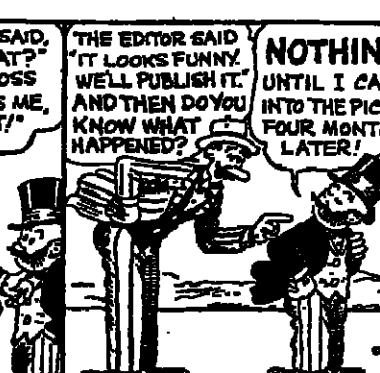
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY MARCH 28, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Conditions today provide you with an excellent opportunity to discover just what can be done to make conditions at your own residence more favorable as well as more operative.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You have every sort of chance today to get a business person to give you the expertise you require in order to have affairs function more smoothly.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Much conversation with an associate of fixed ideas can show you the right manner in which to have a greater harmony but a compromise must be made.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Look into whatever new gadgets or methods are now on the market that you can utilize to make whatever your duties are easier to perform with skill.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Take some time out to look into various entertainments and amusements to make sure you are enjoying the ones you like best or make changes.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Think about the various items that can be improved at your residence so that a greater accord will exist between you and members of your family.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) An excellent day to use your

discriminating and selective faculties to find the right sources of information by which to round out your success.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Now you are able to come to a better awareness of just what you can do to add to your income and revenue and have a greater feeling of security.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You now would be wise to turn your attention to your own deepest desires and plot and plan the best ways you can make them a part of your life.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You need to quietly, alone or with a trusted advisor, think out a course of action you can put in motion in the days ahead to gain headway.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) Consider well how you can repay good friends who have been helpful to you in gaining the personal objectives that mean so much to you.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 19) A day to find out just what anyone who has influence over your outside affairs expects of you and to conform to such a plan willingly.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) A whole new attitude and forward leap can be yours now if you are alert to the new interests and activities that are waiting your acceptance.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



"It's a special type of hearing aid. It only lets you hear kind words and compliments!"

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME.

by HERRI ARD.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

1. KYWAG

2. VELOR

3. HURGOT

4. FIRMON

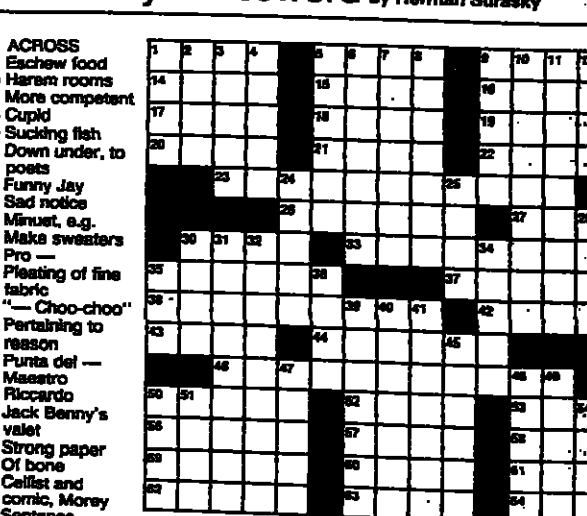
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here:

Yesterday's Jumbles: RIGOR LAUGH SAVAGE CATCHY

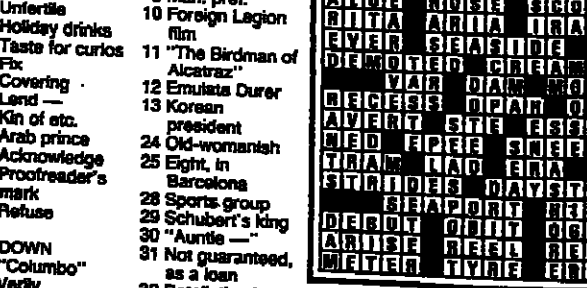
Answer: Sometimes delivered on his rounds—CIRCULARS

THE Daily Crossword by Herman Surasky



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Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:



41 Pertaining to morning

45 Enigma

47 Kind of surgeon

48 Single

49 Mail of song

51 Spanish boy

54 Profit

55 Chipper

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
AND TANNAR HIRSCH

THE RIGHT HAND AT THE RIGHT TIME

Neither vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ K 8 5 3
♥ A K 9 4
♦ K Q 7 3
♣ 2

EAST
♠ A 4
♥ J 6 5 3
♦ 9 8
♣ 9 7 6 5 4

SOUTH
♠ Q 7 6 2
♥ J 10 6 4
♦ A K J
♣ A K J

The bidding:
South 1 Pass
West 1 Pass
North 4 NT Pass
East 6 Pass

Opening lead: ♠ 2
Duplicate bridge aficionados are wont to claim that the main attraction of the game is that it removes the element of luck from the game, because everybody plays the same cards. Fiddlesticks! If you don't believe us, rest our case on this hand from a team-of-four match.

At both tables the final contract

was six spades, reached at one table on the auction shown. The duplication in clubs was unfortunate—make the jack of clubs the jack of spades and the slam would have been an excellent one.

With nothing to choose between the rounded suits, one West elected to lead a club. That presented declarer with an extra trick he did not need. Having won the first trick in hand, declarer led a spade to the king and ace. Now there was no way to avoid losing a second trump trick—down one.

At the other table, West also chose an attacking lead—only this time it was the other rounded suit, hearts. Declarer won in dummy and led a trump to the queen in hand. When that held, declarer continued with a low trump, ducking in dummy. That fetched the ace and the slam was home. In the trade, that is known as a "coup en blanc."

This hand swung the match. Was the West who led a heart rather than a club the better defender? Was it superior dummy play that resulted in a spade being led from the board at one table, but not the other? No, just plain luck!

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTERS AMMAN - SHARJAH
TELEPHONE 640170 / 640171
ORGANIZED MARKET PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 27/03/1993

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
JORDAN BANK	103,940	132.000	132.000
JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	151,979	5.000	5.000
JORDAN COMMERCIAL BANK	12,003	23.250	23.250
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	34,647	3.880	3.880
JORDAN TRADING BANK	72,043	3.920	3.920
JORDAN SAVINGS BANK	14,931	2.530	2.530
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	41,000	5.430	5.430
JORDAN BANK FOR SAVINGS & INVESTMENT	67,748	4.780	4.780
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	12,718	4.150	4.150
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	84,713	3.120	3.120
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	12,465	6.000	6.000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	11,270	3.300	3.300
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	100,967	1.790	1.790
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	340	3.600	3.600
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	2,800	2.800	2.800
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	525,579	4.070	4.070
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	1,700	3.350	3.350
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	430	4.100	4.100
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	5,400	2.200	2.200
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	140,460	2.000	2.000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	1,230	1.070	1.070
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	3,410	2.100	2.100
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	175,730	4.700	4.700
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	8,455	1.680	1.680
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	50,087	0.810	0.810
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	2,940	1.180	1.180
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	1,040	2.080	2.080
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	8,568	1.470	1.470
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	61,043	2.380	2.380
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	46,242	1.850	1.850
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	1,907	3.080	3.080
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	54,233	10.000	10.000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	2,450	7.000	7.000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	13,140	6.100	6.100
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	30,433	1.800	1.800
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	35,847	1.150	1.150
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	21,685	5.400	5.400
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	3,410	2.100	2.100
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	2,350	4.750	4.750
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	5,150	3.400	3.400
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	51,520	33.950	33.950
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	899,248	15.100	15.100
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	403,032	3.400	3.400
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	182,454	14.500	14.500
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	70,629	0.920	0.920
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	340	0.680	0.680
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	106	1.780	1.780
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	34,393	0.990	0.990
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	204,860	4.230	4.230
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	124,802	0.620	0.620
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	17,370	2.850	2.850
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	125,460	3.400	3.400
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	11,000	4.300	4.300
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	10,200	3.200	3.200
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	142,802	0.620	0.620
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	394,244	9.000	9.000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	21,710	4.000	4.000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	136,144	4.400	4.400
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	1,300	4.000	4.000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT & FINANCE	206,439	5.770	5.770
GRAND TOTAL	5,152,188		

Financial Markets

In co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close	New York Close
Sterling Pound	1.4750	1.4870
Deutsche Mark	1.6436	1.6335
Swiss Franc	1.5235	1.5133
French Franc	5.5870	5.5540
Japanese Yen	117.35	116.55
European Currency Unit		1.1878

1 US PER 100
European Opening at 10:00 a.m. (GMT)

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Dirty or not, the world will burn more coal

LONDON (R) — Leaders of the world coal industry met in London this week to send a bleak message to those who fret about pollution and global warming.

Reserves of about a trillion tonnes of coal and lignite are colossal. And humanity seems determined to mine and burn the stuff.

Talk at a World Coal Institute conference of industry leaders of 50 countries centred on ways to do this that might curb the emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) and other damaging gases.

But much of the coal is in Russia, China and India. The new "clean coal" technology has evolved in the affluent West and it costs the kind of money that poorer nations can ill afford.

"Coal production is forecast to increase by nearly 25 per cent by the year 2010," says the World Coal Institute, an industry association.

Coal, which emits more CO2, sulphur and other pollutants, will probably displace oil at the top of the global energy mix.

The big increase will be in Asia, where the most populous nations, China and India, own a fifth of world reserves.

Ecologists Anita Gordon and David Suzuki reckon in their book "It's a Matter of Survival" that global emissions of greenhouse gases — said to contribute to global warming — will double in 40 years if those two nations burn as much coal as they hope to do.

But despite such concerns, electricity supply in Asia, where there are already chronic power shortages, will depend on coal.

That region, according to Alan Burrell of the Asian Development Bank, will early next century have some 200 cities of more than a million inhabitants each.

"1997 will mark a turning point when most of the world's population will live in urban areas," he says. "These people will aspire to the higher standards of living that they see in the industrialised world and these aspirations will, inevitably, critically depend on electricity."

For Mr. Burrell and others who gave papers to the London meeting the need is to burn coal as efficiently and cleanly as possible.

The abandonment of fossil fuels as an energy source for power generation is inconceivable," said Hans-Dieter Harig, managing board member of German utility Veba A.G.

Mr. Harig said coal use was likely to rise even in mature economies. The European Coal Community may be burning nearly 20 per cent more coal to generate electricity in 2010 than it does now.

Technical possibilities and the inefficiency of most existing power stations led Mr. Harig to see great potential for reducing CO2 emissions.

Average power station efficiency in Europe is about 35 per cent. Better than 50 per cent might be achieved by burning coal under pressure in modern plants, he said.

But there could be no quick fix. It would need a global commitment, starting now, to a programme led by the industrial nations to modernise coal power stations throughout the world.

The Asian Development Bank thinks that investment to meet Asian electricity demand will cost \$500 to \$900 billion over the next 10 years.

European experts urge better use of older workers

GENEVA (R) — European and North American officials, ending a four-day population conference, Friday urged better use of older workers and pensioners.

The officials, from 45 countries and including 15 ministers, adopted 88 separate recommendations on such issues as ageing, migration and health.

The U.N.-sponsored European Population Conference, a regional preparatory meeting for a world conference in Cairo next year, also discussed the threat of a flood of migrants from the old East Bloc into western Europe.

The conference recommended that policies should "stimulate different forms of care for older populations" and try as much as possible to keep elderly people living in the community.

The valuable contribution that the productive roles played by the elderly make to society, especially as volunteers and caregivers, should be given due recognition," it said.

The U.N.'s Economic Commission for Europe warned in a study earlier this week that pensioners would soon start to outnumber children in Europe and North America for the first time.

The report said the number of old people in the two regions had doubled in the past 40 years and would continue to rise sharply in the coming decades, posing a huge financial challenge for governments well into the 21st century.

It said immigration was not the answer to the West's low birth rates and ageing populations.

"Governments should appreciate that, while certain imbalances in the labour market may be compensated for by immigration, immigration may not be a full solution to adjust the age structure," the conference said in its final report. "Heavy reliance on immigration to solve demographic imbalances could in the long run lead to substantial fluctuations in the age structures of national populations."

The conference urged governments to adopt "child-friendly" policies making it easier for women with children to have careers.

They said that rather than encouraging women to stay at home, governments should develop better childcare facilities to help women combine work and family roles and should encourage employers to introduce more flexible schedules.

On migration, considered Europe's most immediate population issue, the conference recommended that both "sending" and "receiving" countries should try to reduce the causes of emigration. In the case of "sending" countries, this could only be achieved by development.

The conference said refugees should still be treated as a special case, however, and be granted "at least temporary protection" in line with international humanitarian standards.

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Kuwait says GCC works on currency cooperation

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's central bank governor said in remarks published Saturday Gulf countries were working hard to tie their currencies to a common basket of foreign currencies in preparation for eventual monetary union.

"Financial institutions and central banks... are making big efforts to support the financial and economic coordination necessary to tie their currencies to one basket," Sheikh Salem Abdul Aziz Al Sabah said in an interview with Al Sayassah newspaper.

Serbs stall Srebrenica convoy

BELGRADE (R) — An attempt by the main U.N. aid agency to send a convoy of relief supplies to the besieged eastern Bosnian Muslim town of Srebrenica was thwarted in Serbia Saturday when police stopped it.

Officials of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said the convoy was stopped shortly after leaving Mali Zvornik as it headed south towards a border crossing into Bosnia at Ljubovija.

It returned to Mali Zvornik while General Philippe Morillon, the commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia, negotiated for it to be allowed to reach the mountain settlement where 60,000 Muslims are blockaded by the Bosnian Serb army.

A second convoy for the Muslim enclave of Zepa, which is also under siege by Serbs in eastern Bosnia, was also stalled at Mali Zvornik.

General Ratko Mladic, the head of the Bosnian Serb forces, had promised Friday that the Srebrenica convoy would be allowed through during negotiations with UNPROFOR commanders on a ceasefire due to take effect across Bosnia at noon Sunday.

Gen. Morillon said Bosnian

Muslims and Croats would also observe the ceasefire after 11 months of civil war.

The deal was struck after talks in Belgrade attended by Gen. Morillon, Gen. Mladic and the head of the United Nations Protection Force in former Yugoslavia, General Lars-Eric Wahlgren.

Gen. Wahlgren said he would chair a meeting of the chiefs of the three warring Bosnian armies at Sarajevo Airport on April 6 to discuss how best to stop the fighting.

Speaking in Sarajevo Friday, Bosnian Vice President Ejup Ganic said of the Bosnian Serb commitment to a ceasefire: "It is good if it turns out to be true."

There have been many ceasefires since war broke out in Bosnia last April, but none has worked. Fighting was reported in the suburbs of Sarajevo and in northern Bosnia Friday.

UNHCR officials in Srebrenica said Friday that the town had not been shelled for 24 hours.

The UNHCR special envoy for former Yugoslavia, Jose Maria Mendiluce, expressed doubts about the truce. "I am sceptical about the gap between everything that had been negotiated (in the past) and the reality."

The announcement of the ceasefire came as Bosnian Serb leader

Radovan Karadzic arrived in Belgrade and threatened to pull out of internationally-mediated peace talks on Bosnia.

Mr. Karadzic told reporters: "First they satisfied the Croats, then the Muslims. Now they have to satisfy the Serbs."

Mr. Karadzic has rejected a U.N.-sponsored plan to split Bosnia into 10 semi-autonomous regions. The deal has been accepted by Bosnia's Muslims and Croats.

International pressure mounted on the Bosnian Serbs not to hold out against the proposals, as President Bill Clinton said he would give the Serbs a few more days before considering more stringent actions to bring them into line.

Mr. Karadzic was defiant: "It doesn't matter. Pressure can only unify the Serbian people."

Meanwhile U.S. cargo planes airdropped supplies to eastern Bosnia Friday night but German planes remained grounded for fear Bosnian Serbs might try to shoot down all relief flights if they join.

Three U.S. Air Force C-130s delivered 17 tonnes of food to Srebrenica, the 18th airdrop to the besieged Muslim town and the 27th overall, the U.S. European Command said Saturday.

But three German Air Force planes also at Frankfurt's Rhein-Main Airbase did not join the mission although they have been ready to fly since Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government approved their participation Wednesday.

The United Nations said Friday that Bosnian Serbs threatened to shoot down all planes dropping relief supplies over Bosnia if German aircraft joined the operation.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said last week protests by Bosnian Serbs would be ignored, but that Bonn would have to reconsider its determination to join the humanitarian flights if there were "a massive rejection."

Bosnian Serbs are bitter about German involvement in the former Yugoslavia, blaming Bonn for pushing the European Community into early recognition of Croatia and Slovenia and thereby the breakup to Yugoslavia.

Serbs have also said German military flights over former Yugoslavia would revive memories of Nazi Germany's bombing and occupation of the country in World War II.

The U.S. Air Force had delivered 770 tonnes of food and 24 tonnes of medical supplies since the operation began on Feb. 28.

Clinton, Kohl map Russia, Bosnia strategy

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl vowed an all-out effort to "keep alive" democratic reforms in Russia and warned defiant Bosnian Serbs of new pressures to stop the "carnage" in Bosnia.

Following their first meeting, Mr. Clinton and Mr. Kohl told reporters they agreed on a broad range of issues.

The plight of Russian President Boris Yeltsin, however, dominated their talks. It prompted them to stress their loyalty to his reform efforts during a joint news conference in the White House.

"We are committed to doing everything we possibly can to keep alive democracy and reform in Russia," said Mr. Clinton, who holds his first summit with Mr. Yeltsin April 3-6 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Mr. Kohl, who recently met the Russian leader in Moscow,



U.S. President Bill Clinton (left) walks with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl in the Rose Garden at the White House Friday (AFP photo)

agreed and said: "Both of us are aware of the fact that any type of setback (for Russian reforms) will be much more expensive than any assistance we give now."

"We want to send a message to the people of Russia that the West — under the leadership of the Americans and the American president — will do everything in its power to see to it that Russia (and other former Soviet republics)... stand a chance to walk on their own path toward freedom," he said.

Mr. Clinton intends to use the summit with Mr. Yeltsin to offer an expanded U.S. assistance package. Options under consideration include providing loan guarantees for Russian troops returned from Eastern Europe and a package to help develop Russia's energy reserves.

Even before he arrived in Washington, Mr. Kohl said Germany had reached the limits of what it could pay after providing more than \$49 billion in aid to Russia, more than half of the Western total.

COLUMN

China's population tops 1.15 billion

PEKING (R) — China, adding close to the equivalent of Australia's population each year, passed the 1.15 billion mark by the end of 1992. A survey by the Ministry of Public Security found that 51.54 per cent of the world's most populous nation were men and 48.46 per cent women, the official Xinhua News Agency said Saturday. Xinhua said the unofficial census was conducted with the help of neighbourhood committees which help police monitor residents' movements. The exact population figure was 1,152,428,217, with 35.5 million more men than women. The urban population rose 8.31 per cent, with almost a third of all Chinese living in cities. Family planning officials admit that despite efforts to dampen population growth, China is in the throes of a baby boom. The population grows by around 16 million people a year and China's agricultural sector is struggling to keep them all fed.

Claudette Colbert back home after stroke

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados (R) — Oscar-winning actress Claudette Colbert, star of the legendary film *It Happened One Night*, is recovering from a stroke at her home in Barbados, a family friend said. "She's doing nicely," said Helen O'Hagan, who is staying with Colbert on her estate, Bellevue, in Barbados. "She's sitting in her living room overlooking her terrace right now." Colbert, 89, entered Bay View Hospital near Bridgetown, after the March 2 stroke and was released on March 16. Ms. O'Hagan said she is still working with a therapist, she added. The cherubic Colbert, with her trademark fringe, gained fame as the queen of 1930s Hollywood comedies. *It Happened One Night*, widely recognised as her best film, earned 1934 Academy Awards for Colbert, co-star Clark Gable and director Frank Capra. French-born Colbert spends most of her time in Barbados, but usually travels to New York for a few months each year. Ms. O'Hagan said it was too early to say whether Colbert would be recovered enough to travel this year.

Adopt a gum tree and save the koala, Japanese told

TOKYO (R) — Australian conservationists are urging Japanese tourists to help save the threatened koala bear by sponsoring their personal gum tree, a Tokyo daily said Saturday. Rapid development along Australia's eastern seaboard including big tourist projects is destroying huge areas of eucalyptus gums, the leaves of which are the koala's only food source. Deborah Tabart, executive director of the Australian Koala Foundation, told the daily Yomiuri she plans to launch a tree-planting campaign in April. Tourists who pay a small sum would personally plant a gum tree and tag it with their name. "Most of the tourists coming to Australia are Japanese," Ms. Tabart told the daily. "I hope they'll be able to learn the importance of nature by planting our trees." Japanese have made the koala a symbol of cuteness, with its likeness emblazoned on tee-shirts, school satchels, soft drinks and underwear.

Farrow: Allen molested daughter in attic

NEW YORK (AP) — Testifying in their bitter custody battle, Mia Farrow detailed Woody Allen's alleged molestation of their daughter Dylan, saying the 7-year-old girl told her Allen "touched her in certain places." Farrow also charged Allen began his affair with her older adopted daughter, Soon Yi Previn, when the girl was in high school, not in college as Allen has indicated. And she admitted lashing out last year at Miss Previn, now 22, upon finding nude pictures Allen had taken of her. "I'm not proud of it," said Farrow, her voice trembling and her eyes welling. In her first public comments on the abuse charges, Farrow quoted Dylan as saying Allen had asked if she wanted some "father daughter time" during an Aug. 4 visit at the actress' Connecticut home. "She said he took her into the attic and that he touched her in certain places," including the vaginal area, the actress testified. At another point, Farrow testified that Dylan said "she wanted a real daddy, not a boyfriend daddy." Allen, 57, and Farrow, 40, his companion and leading lady of 12 years, are fighting for custody of Dylan and son Moses, 15, both adopted, and their biological son, Satchel, 5.

Over 300 drown in Bangladesh

DHAKA (R) — More than 300 people were feared drowned and at least 25,000 lost their homes in Bangladesh when storms sank an overcrowded river ferry and cargo boats and left a trail of destruction across the land.

The gales began Friday night, swamping the ferry M.M. Jubair in the Tetulia River while it was sailing from Barisal to Lalmonahar with some 250 people on board.

"Suddenly we found ourselves caught in powerful winds. Minutes later the ferry listed on one side and went down with men, women and children screaming for help," survivor Abdul Hossain said.

Officials said the ferry, sailing a day after the Eid Al Fitr festival during which Muslims traditionally visit their home towns, was carrying about 100 more than its legal capacity.

More than 100 people managed to swim ashore but the rest — including the captain — were missing, believed to have drowned.

Divers and fishermen scoured the river Saturday, recovering six bodies, including two police guards.

Initial attempts to salvage the boat failed and rescue ships were not expected to reach the wreck until Saturday evening.

The sudden deluge in southern Bangladesh left at least 25,000 people homeless, officials said.

"The storm totally destroyed more than 2,500 houses in Bhola and Barisal districts in just three minutes," District Administrator Mohammad Mamtazuddin said after visiting the affected areas.

"Up to 200 people have been injured in the freak storm. We are expecting more details, including possible deaths," he told Reuters.

Winds gusted at up to 60 mph (95 kph), uprooting hundreds of trees, damaging crops and cutting off communications.

Local authorities have started distributing relief goods.

State radio said the storm also overwhelmed and sank 22 boats carrying rice and other cargo on the Anilkha River near Barisal Friday night.

It gave no details but local residents said such boats carry up to 10 people each as they sail between river ports.

"None of the boats has been traced yet nor any of their people come back," one Barisal official said Saturday.

Officials told reporters Saturday afternoon that hopes of finding more ferry passengers alive were fading.

Angola rebels fight for control of Cuito

LUANDA (R) — UNITA troops fought for control of the central city of Cuito Saturday while talks continued with the United States to revive a tattered Angolan peace pact.

Defence Ministry spokesman Brigadier Jose Manuel "Jota" said fighting continued in Cuito but he said the government controlled the airport and urban areas.

UNITA radio said Friday night Jonas Savimbi's rebel forces had advanced further into Cuito and controlled 95 per cent of the city, with a population of a quarter million.

Meanwhile, senior U.S. officials met for a third day with a UNITA delegation in the Ivory Coast to discuss ways of reviving a 1991 peace agreement between Mr. Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola and the Angolan government.

Diplomats said UNITA secretary for information Jorge Valentin had presented an eight-point proposal for reviving the peace process, which broke down after UNITA rejected its defeat by the ruling MPLA in elections last

September.

"The two essential points are the formation of a transition government — I have heard a period of two years being bandied about and UNITA calls administrative decentralisation, presumably a codeword for some form of regional autonomy," one U.S. official said.

He declined to specify the other points of the UNITA proposal, put to a team led by U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Geoffrey Davidson, but he said Washington had difficulties in accepting some of them.

If the United States feels there are sufficient grounds for calling a fresh round of peace talks, it will discuss the idea with Portugal and Russia, the other official observers of the 1991 peace agreement, and the United Nations.

They could convene a fresh round of face-to-face negotiations between UNITA and the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), which has governed the country since independence from Portugal in 1975.

Angolan government officials

were also in Abidjan, but with no declared intention of meeting UNITA negotiators.

The government delegation was reported to include Faustino Muteka, and General Higinio Carneiro, both members of the MPLA government team at last month's aborted peace talks in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa.

In Angola, diplomats and aid workers expect Cuito, the capital of Bie province, to fall to UNITA shortly.

The rebel movement captured central highlands capital Huambo on March 6 after a fierce two-month battle and is consolidating its control of the region.

Menongue, a city of more than 80,000 people on the southeastern fringe of the central highlands is under continuous artillery bombardment and UNITA is pushing westwards towards the coast to try to capture the garrison town of Cubal.

But government forces are advancing in northwestern Angola and are expected to regain control of the area soon.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Indian hijacker surrenders

AMRITSAR, India (R) — An unemployed tractor mechanic, saying he wanted to protest against India's politicians, hijacked an Indian Airlines plane Saturday but surrendered peacefully eight hours later. All 192 passengers, including two young children and a baby, and nine crew members left the Airbus A-300 unharmed.

"I wanted to show the world that India is going to the dogs," hijacker Hari Singh, 45, who did not have any explosives strapped to him as he had claimed, told reporters after surrendering.

"Corruption is on the increase in the country, communalism is on the rise and people's passions are being aroused on communal grounds," he said. "I wanted to highlight these things, so I hijacked the plane," said Mr. Singh, who added that he had been a worker for Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's Congress Party for the past 10 years. Mr. Singh, who said he was from the village of Jhajjar in Haryana state near New Delhi, wore a long shirt bearing the faces of politicians he blamed for religious violence in which about 2,000 people were killed in December and January.

India's Rao moves to quell dissent

SURAJKUND, India (R) — Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, under heavy pressure from dissidents over an upsurge of Hindu nationalism, launched a sharp counter-attack Saturday at the annual convention of his Congress Party. Mr. Rao told delegates he would not tolerate dissent within the party. "There is a point beyond which continued and motivated dissent can harm the interests of the party," Mr. Rao said, without naming any of his detractors. "The time has come to put a stop to this activity and enforce discipline," he said. "There has been a lot of criticism that I have been too soft. I will have to respond." A group of dissidents led by Human Resources Development Minister Arjun Singh has been demanding that Mr. Rao give up one of his two posts — prime minister or party president — to rejuvenate the Congress.

5 lost in U.S. Navy crash

LONDON (AP) — An observation aircraft assigned to monitor relief drops in Bosnia-Herzegovina crashed in the Ionian Sea and five crew members are missing, the U.S. Navy said. The E-2C Hawkeye, based on the carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, had not encountered any hostile fire, according to a statement released by U.S. Naval Forces, Europe. The crash was reported 2354 GMT Thursday night, about a mile from the carrier, as two Hawkeyes were returning to the carrier, the navy said. It said the Theodore Roosevelt was operating south of the Straits of Otranto as part of Sixth Fleet operations in support of Operation Provide Promise.

Japan prosecutors indict Kanemaru

TOKYO (R) — Japanese prosecutors indicted the ruling party's fallen godfather Shin Kanemaru on a second count of massive tax evasion Saturday and were poised to dig deeper to track down the sources of his illegal funds. Senior officials of the Tokyo Prosecutors' Office told a news conference they had concluded their investigation into Mr. Kanemaru's tax abuses. At the same time, they said they will continue to look for more evidence that could expose shady links between Mr. Kanemaru and the companies and individuals that lavished money on him. "We indicted former lawmaker Kanemaru today on charges of tax evasion after discovering that he concealed income of 1.65 billion yen from 1988 to 1989," said Kiyohiko Masui, chief prosecutor of the Tokyo Prosecutors' Office. "I'm very pleased with the progress made in this case."

10 drug dealers executed in China

PEKING (R) — Ten drug traffickers have been executed in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou, the official Xinhua News Agency said Saturday. The sentences were carried out Friday after approval from the Supreme People's Court. The agency quoted local court official Deng Guoji as saying that drug dealers were running rampant in the city, across the border from the British colony of Hong Kong, and that the number of drug addicts was rising. More than 100 drugs offenders were sentenced to death in Guangzhou between 1988 and 1992, the agency said.

'S. African nuclear programme helped by U.S., Israel, Germany and France'

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — An arms control activist has accused the United States, Israel, Germany and France of providing crucial help to South Africa's nuclear programme for decades.

The statements contradicted President F.W. de Klerk, who said Wednesday that South Africa's nuclear programme was entirely home grown. He disclosed that six atomic bombs were built during the 1970s and 1980s, but said they were dismantled in 1990.

"What they are saying is only the tip of the iceberg," said Abdul Minty, head of the Norwegian based World Campaign Against Military And Nuclear Collaboration With South Africa. He was born in South Africa but left in 1950.

Mr. Minty said Mr. de Klerk denied foreign assistance because

he did not want to embarrass Western nations that not only helped South Africa build the bomb but kept secret their knowledge of the programme.

Mr. Minty said the U.S. assistance dates to the 1950s, and possibly earlier. A total of 155 U.S. scientists with nuclear expertise visited South Africa between 1957 and 1977, he said, while South Africa sent 90 scientists to the United States.

In addition, Milwaukee-based Allis Chalmers Corp. sold South Africa its first nuclear reactor, which went into operation in 1967, Mr. Minty said.

Mr. Minty, in a news conference at the headquarters of the black opposition African National Congress, said Mr. de Klerk made his admissions largely because of U.S. pressure.

The ANC has praised Presi-

dent Bill Clinton's government for demanding such a public disclosure from South Africa when Foreign Minister P.W. Botha visited Washington recently.

"Why didn't the U.S. put pressure on South Africa in the 1960s and 1970s?" asked Mr. Minty.

He suggested that U.S. officials, along with the De Klerk government, have become increasingly nervous about the prospect of a left leaning black government getting its hands on nuclear weapons.

Mr. de Klerk says he wants a multiracial election next year, and the ANC is the overwhelming favourite. The ANC favours making Africa a nuclear free zone, but its allies include such U.S. foes as Libya and Cuba.

The United States could have forced South Africa's hand much sooner, Mr. Minty said. U.S.

satellites detected a flash, thought to be a nuclear test, off the country's southern coast in 1979, but the information was not made public until it was leaked out much later.

South Africa says it never tested its nuclear weapons. But Mr. Minty said the country was collaborating with Israel during the 1979 test as part of a long standing nuclear exchange.

Most media accounts have said mineral rich South Africa provided the enriched uranium while Israel helped provide technology.

Mr. Minty also said South Africa received substantial aid from Germany in the late 1960s and early 1970s, mostly through the exchange of scientists. He said Waldo Stumpf, the current head of South Africa's Atomic Energy Corp., worked with the Germans during this period.

The French, meanwhile, helped build South Africa's nuclear power plant at Koeberg, in the Western Cape province.

"It is laughable for Mr. de Klerk to state that South Africa developed its nuclear weapons capability without outside help," said Roger Jardine, who handles technological affairs for the ANC.

South Africa's past secrecy and refusal to submit to international inspections have raised suspicions the country could still hold weapons grade fuel or possibly even weapons.

Various reports have estimated that South Africa developed as much as 300 kilograms (660 pounds) of enriched uranium. Mr. Minty said that would be enough to construct 80 nuclear weapons.

He said an "Iraq type" investigation would be needed to uncover the extent of South Africa's nuclear capacity. He said the International Atomic Energy Agency does not have the authority to examine nuclear facilities or documents without government permission.

A joint statement issued Friday night by South Africa's Atomic Energy Corporation and Armscor, the government run weapons industry, insisted only six nuclear bombs were made — and without any foreign help.

It said the devices were designed to explode with the force of 10,000 to 18,000 tonnes of TNT, but were never tested.

The statement confirmed South Africa built two underground testing shafts in the Northern Cape province, but said they were never used.